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WATCH-EYE, THE SHADOW; or, Arabs and Angels of a Great City.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,

AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, "ROSEBUD ROB" NOVELS, "DEATH-FACE, DETECTIVE," ETC.



PORTRAIT OF EDWARD L. WHEELER, ESQ.

AND CHARACTER ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HIS WORKS.

Watch-Eye, the Shadow;

Arabs and Angels of a Great City.

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CHAPTER I.

EIGHTEEN YEARS PREVIOUS.

UPON one of the main streets of the city of Baltimore, stood a one-story frame building, painted reddish-brown, and not bearing a very cheerful appearance. It was evidently a place of business, for a creaking sign swayed to and fro above the door, bearing the intelligence that this was the residence, or at least, the office, of "Silas Pry, Broker."

A step within the office revealed a small contracted room, meagerly furnished with wooden-bottomed chairs and a desk and table. The windows were dusty and ornamented with an ave age crop of cobwebs, and the floor did not look as if it had been scrubbed for a century.

Altogether, it was a disreputable looking den to ornament beautiful Baltimore.

One day in May, 189—, a man sat in this office, turning over the pages of a large ledger, a thoughtful expression upon his knitted brows. He was not an old man—indeed, but thirty years had passed over his head; yet there were wrinkles about his face and a crafty glitter to his steely eyes.

His attire was very common—few would have thought him above the humbler paths in life. Yet, there were those who regarded Silas Pry as one of the pillars of Baltimore finances.

A man, he was, with plenty of money, esteemed by all as honest and fair in all his dealings; a man who had a finger in the city government, and whom everybody called sharp and shrewd.

Silas Pry had come to Baltimore when no one knew it, evidently, and had established himself, without attracting notice; no one knew what were his antecedents. He might be the veriest scoundrel in the world—nobody took pains to inquire into his case.

In his little dingy office he sat, day in, and day out, and "shaved" money and let money upon security, dealing equally hard and grasping with the widow or the millionaire. It mattered not to him whom he smote, or whose mouths he wrested the bread from, by his exorbitant interest and merciless "shave."

As he sat poring over his accounts, to-day, he wore an anxious expression of countenance, and occasionally ran his fingers through his wiry hair, or over his smoothly-shaven face.

"No use," he muttered, closing the book, at last, and lighting his common clay pipe. "I shall let no more money without a bigger premium, and better security. I cannot live on it."

"There is Franzingen, of Charleston, hitherto esteemed a millionaire—he has fled the country, with two thousand dollars of my money in his possession, and what have I to show for it? Nothing—only a bit of worthless paper called a note. And, come to find out, his brother owns all of the real estate and personal property, and—Silas Pry, you're beat!"

The money-lender bit his lips savagely, as he concluded his meditative soliloquy.

But he was speedily aroused by a knocking at his door, in a peremptory manner. Laying down his pen, he went to answer the summons.

A young man, of about his own age, stepped within the office as he opened the door—a stalwart, handsome fellow, of dashing appearance, with a fair face, light curling hair and blonde mustache—a man whose very move was grace and ease, attired in the height of fashion, and bearing the refinement of a higher station in life than that allotted to Silas Pry.

Into the office strode this individual, and dropped into a chair, as if exhausted from long exertion; while Silas Pry turned upon him, after closing the door, with a frown.

"Well, Gerald Tracy, what do you want?" It was in a peremptory manner that this demand was made, as the money-lender confronted his dashing visitor, with an ugly glitter in his crafty eyes.

Gerald Tracy started, as if the harshness of Pry's voice grated upon his senses unpleasantly.

"You need not speak so pointedly," he replied, evenly. "My coming to you, Silas Pry, is not so often that you need regard me as troublesome."

"Yet I do," the money-lender replied, snappishly. "You and I were never first-class friends, I flatter myself. You were the son of old Richard Tracy, as rich a man as ever Maryland reared. I was the son of a cart-driver. Yet we received into society and idolized, because of our wealth, while I was kicked out and ignored, because I was poor. That was the sole difference between us."

"Well, allowing that, what offense have I committed that I should incur your enmity, Silas?"

"Ho! ho! you don't know that you have done ought to incur my enmity, eh? How forgetful you are, to be sure. You did not wed the woman, then, whom I held dearest of all things on earth?"

Tracy smiled good-naturedly, as he stroked his heavy blonde mustache.

"Well, yes, I did win Marion Lee for my wife, but it was not my money that did it," he replied, shrugging his shoulders.

"Perhaps it was your beauty," Pry said, with an undisguised sneer.

"Perhaps," Tracy replied. "Anyhow, we loved each other truly—always shall, for that matter."

But, now, I suppose you are wondering what brings me to you?"

"I am, undeniably," Silas Pry replied, drumming upon the table.

"Then you shall know. I am in trouble, old fellow—in such trouble as I never dreamed of getting in. Imprisonment and social disgrace stare me in the face, and I have come to you for money."

"You come to me for money, Gerald Tracy—you?"

"Ay, even so! I am penniless, and even more—a thief! Listen, and you shall know all, and even though we were never friends, if you are half the man I believe you to be, you will assist me out of my scrape. You have money—though the Lord only knows how you came by it, and you must help me! Do you hear—you must help me, I tell you."

Silas Pry bowed, calmly.

"Go on," he said. "I will listen to what you have to say, and help you."

"You will?" Tracy exclaimed, joyfully. "Then God bless you, for you are more human than I gave you credit for being. Here is my story—a story which ought to cause a blush of shame to rise to the cheek of any man. As you may have heard, we have been living fast over in Washington. Style was requisite to keep us in social standing, and style we have adhered to, firmly. It was not so much my wife's fault as I taught her to be proud, for I come of blood that brooks no equality. It may surprise you to know that the three thousand a year revenue I have received from the old plantation, made but a small figure in keeping up the expenses, and the three thousand additional which I received for my clerkship in the bank went like chaff before the wind. I saw it go—saw that something must be done. Either I must have more money, to pay off the many debts contracted, or my wife and I must bid farewell to Washington and Washington society. This I could not bear to think of, and so I surreptitiously borrowed fifty thousand dollars from the bank, in the dead of one night. You have no doubt heard of the bank robbery, as I find that reports are circulating rapidly, although efforts are being made among the directors to hush the matter up."

"And you—?" interrogated Pry.

"Have been accused of the appropriation. I have one chance to save public disgrace and imprisonment."

"And what is that chance?"

"The directors offer to let me go, scot free, and hush the affair up, providing I return every penny I have stolen from them, and leave the country for five years."

"And you accept?"

"If I can get the money, yes."

"And you intend to leave the country, after having paid them off?"

"Certainly. By so doing I can in five years return, my crime unknown, and none to taunt me of it, an honest man among my fellows."

"And what would you do with your wife during all these years?"

"Leave her in Washington. She will never know what has become of me until I return, rich enough, I hope, to settle all my indebtedness, and begin life anew. My Marion is not afraid to work, and can support herself by her needle, as she did before I wedded her. Though her pride must have fall, it is better so."

"You have Riverdale, yet," Silas Pry suggested, scratching his head. "How much do you value that at?"

"I have refused seventy-five thousand dollars for it, because I promised my father upon his deathbed never to part with the plantation. It is one of the best in the State."

"Well, I have heard you through. What more do you want?" Silas Pry demanded. "You seem to be under a cloud, despite the fact that you have always carried your head so high."

"Do you mean to taunt me?" Gerald Tracy demanded, his eyes flashing.

"Certainly not," Pry replied, rubbing his hands in a patronizing manner. "I sympathize with you, and am your earnest friend."

"Then, will you let me have the money I want?"

"On conditions, certainly."

"On conditions? What do you mean by that? I was not aware that a true friend as you claim to be would ask conditions!"

"Ha! ha! the time is passed when friends trust friends on simple word, Gerald Tracy. Security now takes the place of men's words, as the safest panacea for debt. If you want to give me a mortgage upon Riverdale for seventy-five thousand dollars, I will get you fifty thousand dollars in money!"

"Are you mad, man?"

"Never was more sane, I assure you, my dear Tracy."

"But your proposal is preposterous. Do you suppose I would sacrifice Riverdale in that manner?"

"As you please. I am not in the least particular about letting you have the money. If you accept my offer, you shall have your plantation back when I get my seventy-five thousand."

"And you would take twenty-five thousand dollars out of me for the use of fifty? Why, it's outrageous!"

"You may look at it so, but I can not make a living at a less shave."

A desperate look came into the eyes of Gerald Tracy, as he glanced at his watch, and then through the window across the street, where a well-dressed man stood leaning against a tree.

"A detective, eh?" Silas Pry said, following his gaze, with a crafty smirk.

Gerald Tracy nodded, as he sat staring in a reverie upon the dirty floor.

Silas Pry drummed idly upon his desk, and gazed at his enemy—for he regarded Gerald Tracy as his enemy, and he was the bitterest foe the troubled Washingtonian had.

"My God, why was I ever so long in the dark as to this?" Tracy murmured, as if he had forgotten the presence of Pry. "Why could I not awaken in time to steer out from these accursed breakers, of which I have now run afoul? Poor Marion! it will be a bitter blow to her, when she learns all. But there is no other alternative. God knows I wish there was. I must accept the terms of this inhuman land-shark, and break my promise to my dying father. For the time is growing short. Inside of an hour, I must place the money in the detective's hands, or go to jail and suffer disgrace and imprisonment. No! no! not that, by Heaven! I'll commit murder before I go to jail. Let me see. A train leaves for the West to Pike's Peak and Denver this evening, and there I shall go. I have already written to Marion, so everything is complete except—"

"Signing the mortgage!" Silas Pry finished, eagerly, laying aside his pen, for he had been writing rapidly during the latter part of Tracy's soliloquy.

The Washingtonian looked up with a start, and gazed keenly at the money-lender.

"Why is it that you are so eager?" he demanded, suspiciously. "Perhaps you expect to have Riverdale for your own? But you will be mistaken. Inside of twenty years—aye, nineteen years from this, the 10th day of May, I will return prepared to pay off your claims, principal and interest. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly," Silas Pry said. "Shall I fill out a mortgage for your property to be foreclosed in nineteen years from to-day, if not taken up?"

"I suppose so. I see no other alternative," Tracy said. "Go ahead, I will call in the detective for a witness to the compact."

Silas Pry set to work at writing, briskly. At beckon, the detective crossed the street and entered.

He was a low-browed, fierce-looking fellow, powerful of build, and the possessor of an evil air of eyes, around which lingered traces of dissipation.

Gerald Tracy paced up and down the room, his head bowed, and an expression of despondency upon his face.

Silas Pry at last finished writing, and after reading over the mortgage handed it to Tracy.

"Sign that, please," he said, briskly, "and Riverdale shall raise you the money."

Gerald Tracy took the document and read it several times over. It was a formal mortgage upon the plantation known as Riverdale, given to Silas Pry by Gerald Tracy in consideration of twenty-five thousand dollars U. S. money, said mortgage not to be foreclosed until nineteen years from date—interest, during the interval, to accrue and be added to the principal at time of liquidation or foreclosure.

"All satisfactory?" Silas Pry demanded.

"Yes, I suppose so," the other replied, as he seated himself, and signed the document in a bold, graceful style of chirography. "Now give me the money."

Without demur, Silas Pry unlocked a safe which stood beneath his desk, and took out a big roll of bills, of large denominations.

Out of these he counted fifty thousand dollars, the whole making a large stack of paper.

Gerald Tracy took the money, and counted it over to assure himself if that it was correct; then he turned to the detective.

"I have here the price of my liberty. Give me a receipt for it, and it is yours to return to the bank."

Upon a receipt prepared expressly for the occasion by the bank, the detective, William McQuaver, by name, appended his signature, whereupon the receipt and the money exchanged hands, and Gerald Tracy arose to his feet with a sigh of relief.

"At last!" he said. "I am a free man, and prepared to begin life anew. Look out for me, Silas Pry, nineteen years from to-day, the tenth of May!"

And bowing haughtily, he turned and quitted the room, and strode down the street with a firm, elastic step, while Silas Pry smiled, craftily.

CHAPTER II.

EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER.

EIGHTEEN years from the month of May in which Gerald Tracy borrowed fifty thousand dollars from Silas Pry, in Baltimore, previous to his departure from the land of his birth, to seek a fortune in golden lands.

Eighteen years is a long lapse of time, and many changes may be noted in the growth and settlement of our fair, beautiful continent, of which every true-born American is justly proud.

We change the scene of our romance to the Centennial city of Philadelphia, where we propose to chronicle the secret and open events of every day life in the great metropolis—the Quaker City.

Upon one of the principal thoroughfares stood the imposing residence of Judge Felix Vermilyle. It was built entirely of stone, of elaborate finish, and stood upon a terraced lawn which was a perfect paradise of flowers, well-kept shrubs, and spraying fountains, within a labyrinth of circling serpentine walks.

It was one of the finest residences upon the coast, and therein dwelt Judge Vermilyle and his accomplished daughter, the stately Beatrice, an acknowledged queen of society.

Of the antecedents of the Vermilyles, very little was really known, although it was currently reported that they were enormously wealthy, and were of

Virginian birth. They were at once admitted into the best society, and idolized because they were leaders in fashion, and had a limitless bank account.

The judge was interested in a steamship line, owned a large woolen manufactory, and shortly after taking up his residence, was elected to the vice-presidency of one of the first banks of the city.

All this combined to make him popular, and his philanthropy upon several occasions gained him further notoriety through the press.

In society, Miss Beatrice shone resplendently as a star, for hers were ever the most expensive and stylish toilettes, and she was universally esteemed a beautiful woman—a tall, stately brunette of willowy form, with cold, purely chiseled features, dark hair, and eyes to match—eyes that had the power of flashing with intense scorn, or of lighting handsomely with enthusiasm.

Thus the Vermillyes lived in their magnificent home, drove their costly turnouts, gave their fashionable receptions, and carried on a style of existence that was the marvel and topic of discussion at many a tea-table.

One dark rainy evening in May, the grand mansion on Vermillye Terrace was brilliantly illuminated for a *fete*, in honor of Miss Beatrice, upon her nineteenth birthday.

Cards of invitation had been freely circulated among "the best families," resulting in gathering a large assemblage of guests in the Vermillye parlors.

The music of a fine orchestra throbbled weirdly upon the night; the perfume of rare flowers from the well-stocked conservatory was delicately gratifying to the senses; while the hum of busy voices, the revelry of the dancers, the clinking of glasses, and sounds of laughter all betokened the general enjoyment of the hour.

Miss Beatrice was resplendent in a rich evening costume, with her hands, hair and throat bejeweled, and her arm given over to a gay English marquis.

De Haven was his name—the Marquis of De Haven, from London; quite the "catch" of the season the judge had assured his dutiful daughter, previous to the introduction at the *fete*.

The marquis was a pale, effeminate personage, with milky complexion and eyes to match, light hair and sickly side-whiskers of the veriest sandy hue. His dress was natty and his linen immaculate, while he sported a "loud" supply of genuine diamonds, and other jewelry.

An accomplished dancer, he and Beatrice were the observed of all observers, as they whirled through the mazes of the dance.

Judge Vermillye stood gazing on in due parental pride, in company with several business gentlemen of his acquaintance.

"Beatrice looks her best, to-night, Sheffield, eh?" he said, stroking his long beard, complacently.

"Indeed she does, and she and your Englishman dance superbly. From London, you say?"

"De Haven? Oh! yes. I have telegraphed and found out that he is a big gun over on the other side."

"Indeed! Then I suppose we need not be surprised to hear of an engagement soon, eh?"

The judge smiled.

"It depends how well Beatrice likes his lordship. If everything goes on smoothly, I'd as soon have the marquis for a son-in-law as any man I know of, as he seems to be a decidedly jolly dog, and a thoroughly good fellow."

And so, the evening wore on, within the mansion one round of gayety, while outside the spring rain poured down, and the thunder boomed along the heavens as answering the sharp flashes of lightning.

The judge was a liberal provider, and his guests lacked not wine and champagne to wash down the sultriness of the evening and the fatigue of the ball-room.

Outside the illuminated mansion and grounds of Judge Vermillye, humble passers-by would occasionally pause for a moment, to gaze upon the scene of revelry, or to listen to the exquisite music that floated out through the open casements.

But such as deigned to pause, were sure soon to hurry away to escape the drenching shower that fell evenly from the clouds—all, save one.

A man came zig-zagging along the street and paused under the lamp-light in front of the gate which led into the lawn of the Vermillye place—a man such as one will seldom meet in the city of Philadelphia—a gaunt, hungry-looking individual, with bleared eyes, an uncommonly red nose, and hair that, to all appearances, had not made the acquaintance of a comb or brush for many a long day. The beard upon his face was of a two weeks' growth, giving him a rough and uncouth appearance. His garments were torn and ragged, except where they were patched with contrasting material; his boots were broken out at the sides and toes, and his hat had evidently some time been used as a target for rifle practice, as it was full of bullet-holes. This comprised his possessions, save it be a small bundle swung to a stick over his shoulder.

A full-fledged tramp looked this fellow, and that he had taken "spirit" consolation lately, was evidenced by the unsteadiness of his gait.

He paused, and steadying himself against the lamp-post, gazed up toward the gaslit parlors, wherein forms of men and women were whirling in the giddy dance, to the music of unseen musicians.

For several minutes the tramp gazed in silence toward the mansion, while the rain poured down upon him pitilessly; then he gave vent to a grunt, the nature of which it would have been difficult to analyze.

"They're havin' a big (*hic*) time up in thar, durned if they ain't," he soliloquized, scratching his chin. "Wonder who keeps that high-toned roost, anyhow?"

Phew! do my nostrils deceive me, or do I really smell chummy? Must be a first-class kind of han'otel, I reckon. Wonder if they receive guests at all hours? Reckon I ain't in first-class rig, but mebbe I'll p-p-pass (*hic*). I wonder ef there's enny dorgs about?"

And, with the instinct belonging to his race, the man peered about the grounds in search of the tramp's worst enemy, a watchful dog.

A sleepy-looking coach-dog lay upon the terrace steps, with one eye open. An ordinary observer would have classed him among the most harmless of dogs, but not so with the tramp. Muddled as was his brain, he was well aware that the sleepy-looking canine was secretly smacking his lips for a piece of tramp.

"No, no, I hain't got any (*hic*) meat for ye, dorgy," this lone adventurer muttered. "Ken't spare a pound, nohow. Kinder (*hic*) intelligent-lookin' purp, that. Wonder if he be susceptible ter f-f-flattery?"

And, searching around among the rags of his coat, the tramp brought forth a fresh piece of beefsteak, and tossed it up on the terrace, in front of the dog.

At first the sagacious animal disdained to notice the offering; but after a few moments, during which time the tramp waited patiently, the scent of the meat caused the dog to rise and approach it and smell it over and over. As a final result, he swallowed it with relish, while the tramp, from his position by the lamp-post, chuckled audibly.

"No, (*hic*) beast or man who is not (*hic*) susceptible to flattery," he said.

The dog went back and laid down upon the steps, after finishing his meal, and waiting a few minutes more, the tramp zig-zagged forward, opened the gate, and ascended to the terrace. As he passed the dog, he gave it a kick, but the poor brute stirred not. He was dead!

Staggering on, the tramp ascended to the veranda, and entered the grand vestibule, which was deserted, and made his way along the hall toward the refreshment room, in the rear, pausing occasionally to inspect such articles of furniture or pictures as aroused his curiosity.

Judge Vermillye was in the dinner *salon*, with a group of his most intimate friends, at the time, engaged in sampling some rare old vintage, and the judge after proposing a toast had raised the glass of liquor to his lips, when a trembling hand suddenly reached over his shoulder and snatched it from his grasp.

With an ejaculation of surprise he wheeled to behold a sight that caused the blood to boil in his veins.

The tramp was quaffing the wine with the greatest of gusto, his face suffused with gracious smiles.

The judge's companions burst into a shout of laughter, while the judge himself smothered an oath.

"By my soul!" he gasped, his face apoplectic in color, "this surpasses any case of actual impudence that ever came to my notice. Who is the fellow?"

"R-r-r-rastus Racket, at yer (*hic*) service!" vouchsafed the tramp, seeming to think that he was called upon to introduce himself. "Werry good wine—w-w-werry good. Don't (*hic*) mind ef I do take another nip, seein' it's you. Y-y—yes, take mine straight!"

And he passed back the glass, smacking his lips, loudly.

Judge Vermillye snatched the glass from his hand, and pointed toward the door.

"Go!" he said, authoritatively, "or I'll have my servants kick you out, you ragged loafer!"

Rastus Racket looked in the direction indicated by the judge's finger, then back at the judge, the blankest of leers coming upon his face. Then he shook his head, dubiously, and his ears wigged to and fro with as much ease as the ears of a mule.

"Have to (*hic*) speak louder!" he muttered: "much deaf, an' (*hic*) can't understand."

"Leave the house I say!" the judge thundered, at the top of his voice, "or I shall have my servants put you out!"

An expression of intelligence immediately lit up the face of the tramp, as if he fully understood.

"Yes, w-werry good wine!" he assented, with a quizzical leer. "Your treat? Yes. Razzer drink (*hic*) wi' you as any better man."

This caused another roar of laughter from the judge's guests, but it thoroughly exasperated the judge, and seizing the tramp by the arm and coat-collar, and dragging him out into the hall, he forcibly pitched him headforemost out of doors.

Closing the door, he returned to his guests and hastily drank off the toast, after which he excused himself for a few moments, and sought the solitude of his library. Here he turned on the gas, and paced to and fro, his face flushed, his whole being agitated with nervous excitement.

"That face!" he gasped—"there is none other in the world exactly the same. By heaven! I am not mistaken in the man, shrewd as was his disguise. This matter must be settled. With that man at large I am not safe. Ruin, exposure, disgrace, stare me in the face. Ha! a ready thought. I have Chica, my Mexican steward. He is safe and trusty!"

Touching a bell the judge summoned a servant whom he in turn dispatched for the Mexican, who soon appeared.

He was a dusky-skinned fellow, some twenty-eight or thirty years, with an evil *grin*, his head, and a general exhibition of restlessness.

"You saw the tramp," Judge Vermillye said. "Well, I don't want him ever to be seen alive again, in this city. Do you understand me?"

The swarthy face smiled, and nodded; then withdrew. While Judge Vermillye descended to the

parlors, feeling somewhat easier, despite the fact that he had pronounced a fellow-mortal's doom.

For Chica was a faithful bloodhound—a human tool to perform whatsoever the judge willed.

"Curse the fellow, how his coming unnerved me!" the judge declared, to his friends, later, as he cracked a fresh bottle.

"I have a particular horror of tramps, and then this fellow was so much bolder than they usually are. To your health, gentlemen, and also—to the tramp's!"

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAMP FINDS FRIENDS.

"HELLO! bless my eyes if I haven't a case of mystery to tackle the very first night of my career as a detective. Jack Sphinx, old boy, you're in luck."

The speaker was a man enveloped in a long oil-cloth coat, with a broad-brim hat slouched over his eyes. He had stopped in traversing one of the many narrow, dark thoroughfares of the city, to bend over an apparently inanimate form which lay outstretched upon the sidewalk.

The night was well advanced toward another day, and as dark as Stygia. The rain still poured down ceaselessly, and not a person was to be seen or heard abroad. The lamps that were posted at the street corners gave forth but a feeble, flickering light—often seemed to die out altogether, as a fierce blast of wind would sweep along through the street.

Jack Sphinx glanced sharply at his surroundings before making an examination of the case which lay at his feet. He was in a locality that had the repute of being none too safe after dark, and caution was one of the ingredients of his composition.

A close scrutiny failed to reveal any person in the neighborhood, and he turned toward his case.

Producing a dark-lantern he shot the slide, and directed the little bolt of light upon the prostrate man.

It was the same tramp who earlier in the evening had invaded the mansion of Judge Vermillye on street.

Had Chica followed him, and executed his master's bidding?

Evidently so, for Rastus Racket lay quite still, as if dead, and there was an ugly bruise upon his left eye, and a red discoloration about his throat.

"There has been foul play here," Jack Sphinx announced. "A sensation for the morning papers: 'A man found dead upon a disreputable street, at midnight, by Sphinx, the great detective!' Hal hal!" and the man laughed at the idea.

Closing the slide of his lantern, he knelt beside the tramp, and tearing open his dirty, ragged shirt, placed his ear to his heart. A moment later he raised his head and glanced around him.

"The chap still lives, whoever he may be," he muttered. "I should say by the scent of his breath that he had been drunk and fallen by the way, only for these bruises and discolorations. I wonder how heavy he is, anyhow."

An attempt to lift the inanimate form proved that he was quite too heavy for one man to carry, although he appeared thin and gaunt from exposure and hunger.

This fact became immediately apparent to Jack Sphinx, and taking from under his coat a small whistle, he blew it rapidly, and shrilly, in little jerks.

In the course of a few moments loud footsteps were heard approaching, and a policeman came dashing up.

"W'at's gone wrong?" he demanded, out of breath, from his run.

"You see, don't you?" Jack Sphinx said, pointing to the body of the tramp. "There's been foul play here, and I want you to help me carry the fellow to O'glesby Row."

"Sho! Is the chap dead?"

"No—merely stunned, I take it."

"Been drunk at that, too," the cop said, smelling the tramp's breath. "Come, let's jerk him down to the station."

"I say no!" Sphinx replied, coolly. "I will take him to my hospital, if you please. The fellow has been assaulted, and I will take care of him, for the present."

"And who are you?" the policeman demanded, surlily.

For answer Jack Sphinx exposed a handsome badge, in the light of his lantern, with a cool ironical laugh.

"My name is Jack Sphinx, detective, at your service!" he answered.

The policeman muttered an unintelligible ejaculation of some sort, and seized the tramp by the legs.

"Come along!" he called. "I reckon you be a new one, or I should 'a' know'd ye."

Without more ado they raised the inanimate form of Rastus Racket between them and bore him away out of that street, into another which was, if anything, darker, but cleaner and less offensive.

After a journey of several blocks, they halted in front of a tenement block, four stories in height, which must have been built years before, for it was now in a ruined condition, the windows being minus many panes of glass, and the bricks decaying and falling out in places.

The first floor was occupied by German and Irish families of the lowest grades, while the upper stories were chiefly tenanted by a more respectable class, the upper rooms being in better condition than those upon the ground.

A broad staircase led from the street, and up Sphinx and the policeman carried Rastus

"You seem to be familiar with this den," the policeman remarked, as they proceeded.

"To some extent, yes," Jack replied. "I have"

little private hospital of my own up in Room 13, run by my Angel of the Attic as I call her. When you see her, you will not think I have overrated her, I am sure."

Pausing a moment on the first landing for breath, they then ascended to the second, then trudged along a long hallway, finally stopping before a door on the left-hand side.

Upon this Jack Sphinx gave a peculiar rap, after which it was opened by a young woman—a maiden, rather, of eighteen summers.

Fair of face and graceful in form, she was a most pleasant object for gaze to rest upon, with her brown, sparkling eyes, sunny hair, and bright expression of countenance.

She uttered a glad cry as she saw Jack, but her cry seemed to die out into a little wail of horror as she caught a glimpse of the policeman and the insensible 'Rastus Racket.

Jack, however, took pains to reassure her, in a kindly tone.

"Don't be frightened, Nellie. I've brought my first case, as I promised I would. An old codger, you see, who has been foully dealt with. Is old Ogglesby in?"

"No, I should not have opened the door, had he been here," Nellie replied. "Bring the poor man inside, Jack, and if I hear Jared coming, I will hide him."

With the policeman's aid, Jack lifted 'Rastus Racket inside the room, and laid him on the lounge. The officer then bowed and took his departure.

As soon as he was gone, Nellie sprang eagerly to Jack's embrace.

"Oh! I am so glad you came, Jack, for I have been so lonesome, and fearful that some harm would come to you in your new vocation!" she said, throwing her arms about his neck, and pulling him down so that she might kiss him.

For Jack Sphinx was a fellow that any woman might adore. Tall and stalwart, with a well-developed form in which was a superabundance of strength and muscle; a keen eye, regular classic features that many would have pronounced handsome, brown curling hair, and a high, intellectual forehead, he was the picture of a handsome man.

A light brown mustache shaded his mouth, about which ever lurked a good-natured expression.

"You are glad, my Attie Angel?" he said, returning her caress. "Well, I am glad. But, laying aside lovers' matters, here's my first professional case waiting our attention. How long before you expect Ogglesby?"

"Oh, Jack, I do not know. He is very cruel to me. He got very drunk to-day, and went out, declaring his intention of making a night of it."

"Humph! Let me catch him drunk upon the street, and see how quick I'll jerk him into the station."

"Don't do it, Jack, I beg of you. He is a vindictive old wretch, and he would do you harm should you interfere with him. I grow to fear him more and more every day I live. He even threatened to pound me, last night, and would, no doubt, had not Mr. Crockett, next door, interposed and argued with him. Oh, Jack, it is awful to be bound out to such an old wretch. I sometimes get to feeling desperate. I didn't need to mind it so much, until I met you, Jack, and learned that there were some good people in the world."

"My poor little Angel," the young detective said, softly, smoothing back the sunny hair from her forehead. "Yours is indeed a hard lot. But take cheer. Three more years will place you out of Jared Ogglesby's hands, and then whom will you seek to protect you for the remainder of your life?"

"You, of course, Jack—who else do I know who has been as kind to me as you? No one—no one whom I care half so much for. You may have me even sooner than you imagine, Jack."

"How do you mean?"

"Jared Ogglesby is failing every day. Old age and rum are shattering his system, and he can not long hold out."

"Well, pretty, the sooner you are free to come to me as my little wife, the better it will suit me. I've got a little nest all prepared for your arrival. But here we are again, neglecting our subject. I will see how badly he is bruised, patch him up a little, and leave him in your care. When Ogglesby comes, you can hide him in the secret partitioned hallway which I discovered. I don't believe he'll be molested there, until I can come and see him again."

They now set about making an examination of the tramp's injuries.

Search disclosed only the ugly bruise over his left eye, and the discolored ring about his neck. Otherwise he appeared to have received no disabling hurts.

"He has been choked, evidently, or else a cord with a weight to one end, such as is used by the Oriental stranglers, has been slung about his neck, the weight striking him upon the eye!" Jack said, reflectively. "The latter is probably the correct theory. He seems to breathe regularly, and will be all right as soon as restored to consciousness. Is there any liquor in the house?"

Nellie hurried to a cupboard, and brought forth a bottle which was the property of Jared Ogglesby. This Jack took, and poured a few drops between the lips of the tramp.

The effect was electrical.

A shudder seemed to traverse the man's frame, and he gave a gasp, after which he slowly opened his eyes.

Jack raised him to a sitting position, and then stepped back a pace.

"Humph!" 'Rastus Racket grunted, staring about in some curiosity.

"That's the matter? Where am I? Who are

you?" and his bleared eyes turned inquisitively upon Jack and Nellie.

"One question at a time, if you please, my friend, and we will endeavor to answer you," Jack answered, with a smile. "My name is Jack Sphinx, at your service. This young lady is Miss Nellie Morton, my betrothed."

The tramp stared at Nellie, queerly.

"Beautiful!" he muttered, half aloud.

"You've made a good choice, young man. She will make you a good wife. But, how came I here?"

"Well, you were carried here by a policeman and myself. I found you lying insensible in a dark street, and taking pity on you, had you conveyed here to my private hospital."

"Ugh! I remember," the tramp said, rubbing his injured eye. "I was drunk, as usual, and somebody lassoed my neck, like they do on the plains, and thumped me over the eye with a stone. I didn't seem to remember any more just then. Rather a game-lookin' optic, eh?"

"Yes; you will have to be careful or you will lose it. So you were drunk, then, when attacked?"

"I'll allow I was. You see the fact is I hain't seen many sober days since I've been East."

"And why? Do you not know that whisky is a man's worst enemy?"

"Yes, I reckon you're right, young man; but, you see, when I cum back East, after an absence of nearly seventeen years, and found the hopes of a lifetime all blasted and withered, I war as disconsolate a mortal as ever trod *terra firma*, an' I tuk ter drink. That war nigh a year ago, an' since then whisky's got so firm a hold upon me that thar's no sech a thing in th'r Bible as lettin' it alone. Besides, ye see, thar's nothin' for me ter live for—no wife, no chick nor child, no friends—an' I calculate the sooner I find my way to a hole in the ground, the better for myself and the world at large."

"You have a wrong idea altogether, my friend," Jack said, earnestly. "There are hundreds ready to grasp you warmly by the hand, were you to redeem yourself."

"Ye don't mean to say that ye believe it, young feller?"

"Certainly I do. I speak only what I believe. A drunkard has no true friends, but a temperate man has many. The world is not yet so gone to the bad that there are not honest, faithful souls in it."

"Mebbe you're right thar, but I've been clear over the world, and as a general thing the people war all greedy, selfish an' worldly. No use o' me tryin' ter stop ticklin' my weazand w' tarant'ler, no use. Nothin' short o' extreme poverty an' a prison cell'd do the job. Sumbines I think I'd go to jail a year ef I could regain my wits an' be as I was a few years ago."

"Oh! sir, I am so glad to hear you say so!" Nellie cried, clasping her hands eagerly. "Jack, if we could only induce him to go to the Reform Home! I am sure they would kill his appetite for strong drink, and oh! how happy it would make me!"

"Thankee, little gal. You're the first woman who has said as pleasant a thing to me since—well, since long, long ago."

And the tramp brushed moisture from his uninjured eye.

"There is a Home of Reform, here in the city," Jack explained, "in charge of a kind-hearted physician and his family, where intemperate men and women are taken under treatment, and I am happy to say that many wonderful cures have been effected. But the charges are necessarily high—and—and I fear they would be above your reach. But perhaps the united contents of our pocket-books might procure you an entrance, that is, if you would go."

"Oh! do go—please do!" Nellie said, eagerly, "and when you come out, we will be your friends, and so will others, and perhaps Jack could get you a good paying job, for Jack's bound to be an influential citizen, you know, and—"

Pretty Nellie paused in her childish enthusiasm, while 'Rastus Racket chuckled outright:

"You're a good little girl, miss, an' it does me good to hear you talk. My life o' late years has been barren o' sech streaks o' sunshine as your bright presence unfolds. An' I've made up my mind that I'll try your proposition, though it'll probably be a tough pull through. As to money, little gal, why, I've lots of it, an' when 'Rastus Racket makes his will, you an' your prospective husband, thar, shall have a large slice out of my golden pie. Ah! I had forgotten—my bundle! What has become of it?"

And the tramp's face grew pale as he gazed around and did not behold it.

"My bundle!" he repeated, excitedly. "If that is lost I am ruined!"

"Calm yourself, my friend!" Jack said. "I left the bundle behind, for I did not consider it of any value. I gave it a kick up an alley, and no doubt it is there still. I will go at once and get it!"

And seizing his hat, he hurried from the room, and in the direction where he had found the tramp lying.

Nellie and 'Rastus Racket waited impatiently, and in the course of half an hour heard somebody coming up the stairs, three steps at a time, as if in a great hurry.

"It is Jack! it is Jack!" Nellie cried, joyously, springing forward and opening the door, to admit him. "And he has got your bundle, too, Mr. Racket."

"Yes, I found it just where I had kicked it," Jack explained, as he delivered the bundle, which was wrapped in an old silk handkerchief.

The tramp received it with muttered thanks and proceeded to open it. Nellie and Jack stood by, watching, more out of curiosity than intention.

A couple of sealed envelopes rolled out as the bun-

dle came untied, and then a handful of large golden coins, several gold rings, and one set with diamonds of great size and brilliancy.

"Oh! how pretty!" Nellie could not help saying, enthusiastically, while Jack gazed silently on, not a little surprised.

"Oh! I got 'em all honestly!" 'Rastus Racket assured. "I grubbed for gold sixteen years, steady, and I salted down a few sech things. Here, leetle gal, I'll give ye the diamond ring to keep 'til I come out o' ther Home as ye call it. An' Jack, heer, kin keep the rest for me. Now, then, I'm all ready to go and try to make a man of myself."

"But you should not trust us!" Jack expostulated. "Ere you come out, something might happen that I would lose it."

"Well, then you may deposit in the Bank of North America in the name of Eurastus Racket, and send the receipt to me at the place where you are going to take me. Come! now, let's go at once, while the fit is on me, or I shall back out."

Jack Sphinx knew that it would be policy to obey, and so, after pocketing the tramp's money, they both bade adieu to Nellie, and descended to the street.

It was not yet daylight, but Jack was aware that the Home was ever open, and so he led the way through the dark streets.

Several times they were stopped by policemen, but the star under the lapel of Jack's coat was equal to a written pass through the lines.

Half an hour later Jack Sphinx emerged from the Reform Home, but 'Rastus Racket was not with him.

The tramp was now where he could not get intoxicating liquors. And he had a year to stay before he could again be set at liberty.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE YEAR LATER—MIKE KEENE'S CLUB—THE STRANGER WITH A GLASS EYE.

ONE year later, in the month of May, on Chestnut street, Philadelphia, stood a large, imposing structure of brick, the ground floor being occupied as a store, and the basement by a fruit-stand. The second floor was taken up for offices by prominent business men, while the whole of the third story was occupied by what was familiarly known to those who were aware of its existence as "Mike Keene's Club."

Gaming establishments are plentiful in the Quaker City, but there are perhaps none run upon as large a scale or conducted on as "high-toned" principles as this Mike Keene's Club.

Unlike other places of the kind, there are not a mixture of games to attract the visitor, but the gambling is confined to one species of game, and that one a "wheel of fortune."

To be sure, there are dice-cups to shake for cigars, but this fact is scarcely noticed for the buzz about the great wheel of destiny.

The wheel in question was a beauty, being large, with a gold-plate hub and axle, upon which it revolved, the spokes being handsomely inlaid with pearl and ivory, and the numbers upon the rim being of solid gold and crested with a diamond to each number.

Those said who knew, that the wheel, with its magnificent mountings, had cost Mike five or six thousand dollars. There were one hundred numbers upon the wheel, and ten cards were usually sold, each card bearing ten numbers. If by chance the snap-finger stopped upon any number upon your card, you were the winner of ninety dollars, while ten dollars went into the coffers of the banker, who was the inevitable Mike Keene himself, the ten cards having all been disposed of at ten dollars a card. Half-cards were sometimes sold to accommodate those who were "broke," or such as were too modest to venture a larger sum. In case some number on the half-card won, forty-five dollars went to the holder of the card, and forty-five to the man who held the other half, and ten into the banker's pocket.

In case the second half of the card was not sold, the banker retained it, and won or lost as the case might be. In every case each turn of the wheel would net to the banker ten dollars, and when sometimes of a day or evening the wheel would go around many hundred times his profits were enormous.

Mike Keene is no fictitious character, as many a poor fool can testify, who has gambled at his club. Popular among the business men, and rich as Croesus, he rejoiced in his calling, claiming that he did good for all the evil resulting from his "little game."

It is but justice in behalf of the people of Philadelphia to say that only a certain few of all the great population knew or ever heard particularly of Mike Keene and his Club. And, as for the city authorities, if they were aware of the existence of such a personage or of such a club-room, they were quiet and close-mouthed about it. At least the police never "pulled" Mike Keene's place, and the Club and its votaries continued to prosper and grow more notorious among business men.

The room in question was furnished with a taste and magnificence rarely ever seen in a gambling hall. The floor was carpeted with rich Brussels, and furnished with luxurious upholstered furniture, while the ceiling was a marvel of the fresco art, and the walls were hung with pictures and paintings, such as one will not often meet with outside of an art gallery.

On one side of the room near the middle, was the standard with an axle upon which revolved the wheel of fortune.

One man stood upon a bench to whirl it, at the clang of the banker's call-bell, while four men, elegantly dressed, stood within the low railing inclosure that encircled the wheel, to sell tickets to the spectators.

A little office in one corner of the inclosure contained the ample proportions of Mike Keene, who was his own banker and treasurer.

He was a thick-set individual, with iron-gray hair and mustache, and wore a pair of gold-rim glasses, when engaged at his work.

The evening of the 8th of May saw quite a crowd in Mike Keene's establishment, composed of merchants, speculators, gamblers by profession, bankers, and occasionally a theatrical manager or actor. Men were there, whose families waited their coming home; men were there who had no homes or families; men were there who professed religion, and in one or two instances were deacons of prominent churches. This may seem incredible, but was nevertheless a fact. Many names of patrons we might mention that would be a thunderbolt in social and religious circles.

Among the votaries about the wheel, was Judge Vermillie.

He was faultlessly attired, in the height of fashion, and was as much engaged as though he were not esteemed a "model society man," an upright and good parent, and an honorable citizen.

The scene was one that was peculiarly exciting.

From overhead the gas she! down a soft radiance; the voices of the criers who sold the tickets, the hum of the wheel, the cries of disappointment or joy, as the case might be, all mingled through the room creating an excitement easy to acquire, but hard to dispel. Many dropped in, just to look on, but before they left were by the luck of others tempted to try their own fortune.

Judge Vermillie had been the lucky man of the evening, having won, continuously.

It was usually the custom of Mike Keene to limit a player to a dozen winnings of an evening, but Judge Vermillie was a friend of the establishment, and could not be offended of course.

At last there entered the club-room a man who had never been seen there before; consequently all eyes were directed upon him for a moment.

He was a good-sized personage, attired in blue broadcloth, with a white shirt and vest that were immaculate, and a silk hat upon his head, which was closely barbered of hair.

Patent-leathers were upon his feet, and diamonds on his fingers, and shirt front; also a massive gold chain was strung across his vest, and a delicate rosebud on his coat lapel, added to the ivory-headed cane he carried, gave to him the appearance of a dandy.

His face was one that once seen, could not soon be forgotten. It was a pale, intellectual face belonging to a man of some forty-eight or fifty years. The features were all perfect and attractive, but in places wore an expression of past suffering. The eyes were dark and sharp, and the mouth firm, being shaded by a heavy iron gray mustache; the hair upon his head was peppered with silver, which was probably the cause of his having had it sheared in the so-styled "fighting cut."

In looking at him one moment, a person would not perceive any difference in his eyes, but a second glance revealed that the left eye was artificial, or in other words a "watch-eye." In some accident this natty stranger evidently had lost his own eye, and had been obliged to fill the socket with an artificial one.

None were there in the club-room, who knew this flashy stranger, for they made no advances to him, nor did he seem to be anxious to cultivate acquaintance.

He was accompanied by a young negro attendant, who was attired in livery, and carried a small leather valise. The two stood near the counter, and watched the game, the master puffing leisurely at a cigar, the while, and noting the changes of luck, indifferently.

He seemed to be proof against the excitement of the game.

"One more card! one more card!" cried the clerks. "Who will have it—who will have the lucky numbers—90 to 100, and sure to win."

The stranger nodded in answer to a glance from his brown attendant, and taking a roll of bills from his pocket purchased the card.

Then right merrily clanged the starter's bell, and he gave the wheel a swift whirl. Around and around it spun, the snap-finger clattering swiftly until the wheel began to slow down, and finally stopped.

The finger pointed to 95!

Not a smile appeared upon either the face of Watch-Eye, or his attendant in consequence of their success, but the latter coolly raked in the ninety dollars and pocketed it, allowing the clerk to take up his card, and sell it to some one else.

And that some one chanced to be Judge Vermillie, who eagerly received and payed for the card, confident that the next "pot" belonged to him.

The cards sold rapidly and a nod from Watch-Eye caused the mulatto to purchase one numbering in the fifties. The remainder sold swiftly, and at last the bell clanged, and the starter gave the wheel a whirl.

"Fifty-five wins!" cried the starter, as the wheel stopped, and the words were scarcely out of his mouth ere ninety dollars were placed in the mulatto's hands and the cards were selling again.

Still not a trace of excitement or enthusiasm appeared upon the faces of the stranger and his attendant. They might have been supposed stone images, so expressionless were they over their luck.

Judge Vermillie was secretly chagrined; but he did not allow the fact to come to the notice of the others. For there were others who had lost many times, when he had won.

The next round Watch-Eye did not take a hand, nor the next, nor the next, and the winning was among men who had lost all the evening.

But the fourth round thereafter, a nod of his head caused his servant to purchase a card, it being numbered in the seventies.

Clang went the bell, and around spun the wheel, stopping at seventy-one.

Watch-Eye had won again!

That seemed but the starting-point, for he won the next seven times in succession, to the astonishment of all, the mulatto in each instance purchasing cards at his master's nod, and pocketing the winnings, pausing occasionally to strike a match, and hold it to the fore of a fresh imported cigar in his master's mouth.

Altogether there was something entirely novel in the way the strange pair behaved, neither of them speaking a word.

Mike Keene, a veteran in gambling, eyed Watch-Eye sharply, seeming in some way suspicious of him.

Judge Vermillie, unable to win since the stranger's advent, grew rather "tonguey," venturing hard hints freely, and by numerous innuendos tried to arouse Watch-Eye's temper.

But this was futile, for Watch-Eye—as the crowd seemed unanimous in nicknaming the fellow—was evidently not easy to provoke, nor did he seem to care to speak.

Determined at last to bring matters to a crisis, Judge Vermillie approached him, and gave him a slap upon the shoulder in a way he would not have thought of doing had he not been imbibing frequently from a "quiet bottle," usually kept in Mike Keene's private closet.

Watch-Eye wheeled around instantly, a look of cold surprise upon his face.

"Well?" he interrogated, haughtily.

"Well!" Judge Vermillie retorted, with a sneer. "You seem to be somewhat on your muscle at gaming. You esteem yourself a sharp 'un, I calculate?"

"I didn't remark anything of the kind, did I?" the other demanded.

"Well, n—no, but one would judge by the style you put on that you imagine yourself a person of some importance."

"Suppose that I do; what business is that of yours?" the glass-eyed stranger again demanded.

"Well, I'll show you, if you give me any of your insolence!" the judge cried, hotly. "Maybe you don't know who I am."

A strange expression shot over the face of Watch-Eye, as he gazed sternly at the insolent banker.

"Yes, I believe I do know you!" he replied, a great depth of meaning in his tone. "If Silas Pry were hanged by the neck until dead, for all his crimes, you would not be insulting your superiors at this minute. Remember! You may know me as Watch-Eye, the Shadow!"

And so saying, the stranger turned and sauntered from the room, accompanied by his servant, leaving the bystanders in a maze of vague wonderment, and Judge Vermillie suddenly grown white with—shall we call it terror?

Evident it was that the two had some time met, in a dark eventful past.

CHAPTER V.

VERMILLIE'S VILLAINY.

NELLIE MORTON was a bound girl.

She had no parents, to her knowledge, and none to care for her except the man who held himself as her master, and Jack Sphinx, who had been her friend for several years.

Jared Ogglesby, her guardian, as it were, was a cruel, grasping, avaricious old wretch, who hoarded his pennies with the closeness of a miser, except when he wanted to satisfy his own unnatural cravings for liquor, when he was free with his cash to a certain extent.

He was agent for the row of tenement buildings for a block upon the street on which he lived, and was said to have money buried in some of the cellars beneath the rookeries, or hidden in the decaying walls.

Concerning the truth of this report, no one knew for certain, but certain it was that he had enough to keep his system soaked in bad liquor all of the time, rendering him ugly, and a dangerous person to be abroad. For he was malicious in his hates and dislikes, and as deep a schemer as ever hatched a vicious plot.

Everybody who had eyes, was well satisfied that Nellie was in no way related to him, but he had documents, all legally drawn up, witnessed and signed, binding Nellie Morton in his service from infancy until twenty-one years of age.

So that the law supported him in claiming the girl, one might say, as his slave.

Nellie worked in a great factory during the daytime, and often into the night, but her earnings always were eagerly demanded by Jared Ogglesby, and stored away with his other hoards.

Then he abused and ill-treated her, and altogether her life was one of constant dread, devoid every ray of sunshine, except when a secret interview with Jack served to cheer her out of the gloomy life she was living.

Many little presents of money and other trinkets found their way to her, through the kindness of Jack, but as she had little use for them she put them away out of the sight of Jared Ogglesby. For when she was in need of money for clothing she always kept it out of her earnings even at the risk of his wrath, although her dress was never more than the plainest.

On the night subsequent to the events related in the previous chapter, Nellie sat alone in the main room of the suite occupied by herself and Jared Ogglesby, engaged at sewing upon a plain calico dress which she wished to wear to the factory, on the morrow.

The hour was late, but this was not uncommon, for she often was obliged to sit up half of the night to wait for Jared Ogglesby's return, as she was afraid to retire before he came, not knowing in what condition he might return.

"I wish Jack were here!" she murmured, wearily laying aside her work, and going to the window which looked out into the narrow street. "When he is near, I am not afraid. And, then, he has not been to visit me in over a week."

As she finished speaking a rap upon the door caused her to start and tremble, with fear and apprehension.

Who could it be?

Surely not Jack, or Jared Ogglesby, for while the former had a peculiar knock, the latter never paused to knock, or if the door was closed, he generally manifested his presence by giving it a kick.

Who then could it be, unless some stranger who was at the wrong door?

"Who is there?" she asked, approaching the door, without opening it.

"Open, please; I am a friend. I have come to await the return of Jared Ogglesby."

Scarcely knowing what to do, under the circumstances, Nellie opened the door, and a man enveloped in a heavy oil-cloth coat and cap, entered the room.

The moment he threw off his wrappings she saw who it was.

It was Judge Felix Vermillie!

He smiled complacently, as he saw her look of surprise, and accepted an unoffered chair.

"Ha! ha! you really seem surprised, my dear Miss Morton," he said, in his most affable tone. "No doubt you were not expecting me, but you see I had a little business with old Jared, and thought I might as well drop in and wait his return. Feeling well, this eve, I trust?"

"Yes, Mr. Vermillie!" Nellie replied, closing the door, and dropping upon a chair near by. Her tones were cold and unfriendly, and Vermillie, as sharp as pointed steel, could but be aware of the fact.

"I am glad to hear it. I thought you were looking pale as I passed through the factory, to-day."

"Pale from overwork, perhaps," Nellie replied, coldly. "One cannot always drudge and assume a cheerful presence."

"Very true. It often causes my heart to ache, Miss Morton, for the slender girls who have to toil so faithfully in our great factories. You, my dear, more than the rest, have I noticed, together with the fact that you are too well-bred and lady-like to be a factory girl. Miss Morton, how would you like to live in the country—that is, as far out as Ardmore, on the Pennsylvania railroad?"

"Sir? I do not understand you!"

"Then let me explain. A few miles back from Ardmore station I have a dairy farm, superintended by an aged couple, who are not blessed with chick nor child, and who want some city young lady to come and stop with them. You, I think, would suit them, and the work for you to do would be but trifling. I will keep you liberally supplied with money, and—"

Here the judge suddenly paused.

Nellie had arisen to her feet, her face pale, and her eyes flashing brightly.

"Stop! stop, Judge Vermillie!" she cried, her voice trembling, despite her efforts to be calm. "You have gone far enough. Once before you insulted me, sir, because you thought that, being in your employ at the factory I would not dare resent it. You found out your mistake, and now, sir, I command you to leave the room, before I call for help and have you thrown out!"

"You—you have me thrown out? Ha! ha! ha! good joke, I'll swear!" and the judge laughed, merrily. "Why, Miss Morton, do you know that I own this place and everything in it? I should smile to see anybody put me out of my own house. Come! come! now, there is no use of you and I being at swords' points, at all. I admire you, and I am willing to do what is fair. You give me your heart and hand, and I'll make you Honorable Mrs. Judge Felix Vermillie. Now, what better offer do you want, than that?"

Nellie shrank back with a shudder.

"Go!" she said, still pointing toward the door; "go, I command you!"

"And I positively refuse. If I cannot prevail upon you to accept a good offer, I will bargain with old Jared Ogglesby. He'll sell you, I'll bet!"

"Sell me!" Nellie gasped, in horror. "He cannot! He dare not!"

"He can, and dare. You were a nameless brat when he took you from an old sea-captain; you were legally bound over to him, and he has the power to bind you over to me!"

"God in Heaven help me, then!" Nellie moaned, staggering back. "Beastly as Jared Ogglesby is, he is not so great a villain as you, Felix Vermillie."

"Thanks for your compliment, my pert miss. By the way, how fares your gay lover, Sphinx? A year ago I had the pleasure of discharging him from my factory, for undue familiarity with—"

"Liar! base liar!" Nellie cried, her temper now thoroughly aroused. "You caused Jack's discharge because you knew he was my friend. But it was a lucky day he left your employ, for he is now on the detective force, where he can confront villainy with a strong hand."

"Oh! he is, eh? Well, I wish him success. But, now, as Jared does not return, I must bid you adieu. I will call and renew our pleasant visit at another time. A kiss, now, my dear, and then I will be gone."

He arose quickly from the chair, and sprang toward her, catching her by the right arm. With a

low scream of affright she struggled to get away, and in so doing, her sleeve tore open, baring her round, shapely arm to the shoulder.

The accident revealed upon the arm, just above the elbow, a livid scar upon the white flesh, in the shape of a star. It was evidently a birth-mark.

Judge Vermilye saw it, and suddenly released her arm and stepped back with a gasp, his breath coming in a sort of horrible fascination.

"Curse you!" he gasped, perspiration starting out upon his forehead—"curse you! I thought you were dead!"

Nellie shrunk back, not knowing what to make of his strange words. She was aware that her birth and infancy were shrouded in mystery, but she knew no more. Why did the birth-mark visibly affect Judge Vermilye? What did he know of her past—of her childhood—of the mystery obscuring her babyhood?

She could not conceive, and trembled as she saw the strange, horrible passion that was creeping over the banker.

"Furies seize you!" he said, in a hoarse voice. "I supposed you dead, but here you are, a stumbling-block in my path. No! no! I'll tolerate no interference or usurpation after all these years—not a thousand times no. It is a fortunate chance that threw this scar before my eyes. You are all mine with me. No one knows me in this locality. Swear that you will marry me, and keep your mouth forever closed, and that scar forever hidden—swear it, or by the God who hears me speak, I will murder you on the spot. Swear! swear by all you hold sacred in this life and the next. It is your only salvation!"

He sprang toward her as he spoke, a long dagger in his hand, poised to strike.

She tried to elude him but her limbs refused to move, and with a low cry she staggered against the wall and leaned there, with face as pale as death, and eyes wild and distended.

"Swear!" he cried, hoarsely, seizing her arm with a vise-like gripe, and raising the knife higher. "Swear to marry me, or I will plunge this dagger into your heart!"

"No! not never!" she gasped, shuddering, expecting to feel the cold steel piercing her flesh—never!

But the knife struck not the promised blow. It was suddenly torn from the infuriated would-be murderer's grasp, and he was hurled to the floor with a crash that caused the floor and windows of the old tenement to clatter noisily.

Not stunned by the fall, Vermilye staggered to his feet, but the strong arms of Jack Sphinx again hurled him to the floor, and this time he lay where he fell, in an insensible condition.

"Oul Jack, you have killed him!" Nellie cried, in alarm.

"No, but it's a pity I didn't!" the detective growled. "I've a notion to finish the job, as it is."

"Oh! no! no! no! don't harm him more than you have already. Please don't, Jack."

"Then I won't, Nellie dear. But I'll assist his ribs over to the Central station, or my name ain't Sphinx. Why, the accursed villain would have murdered you in a second more, if I had not arrived just in time!"

"Yes, but he could have killed me before I would have promised to become his wife."

"Good for you, my peerless! But, I've got him now, just in the shape I've been wanting him for some time. We'll see if some of his murderous nature cannot be pruned down by the law."

"I wouldn't bring him into the police courts, Jack, for it will only increase his enmity toward you," Nellie said, anxiously.

"Let it increase, peerless. Twist you and me, my head has been full of queer thoughts of late, and strange suspicions about this man. He is wealthy, and he is popular, but you take Jack Sphinx's word for it, he's a rascal. And your Jack's the lad as is going to keep a crow's eye on his future movements. Why was he about to murder you, dear?"

Nellie related to her detective lover what is already known to the reader, and Jack Sphinx listened with knitted brows.

"There's a mystery, here," he said, as she concluded, "and into its depths I'm going to penetrate, dear. It looks to me as if you were in the way—as if there were property in the case, or—crime! So, my peerless little waif, you may turn out an heiress to a fortune, or at least, a title. Stranger things have happened. As for old Oggly, he's dead drunk in a low grocery on Calowhill street, and won't be home 'til morning. So you can retire without fear of disturbance. I must now hunt up police aid, and trot his honor off to the station."

First handcuffing the prostrate judge, Jack went in search of a policeman.

On his return with one, he found that the prisoner had recovered consciousness, and was cursing Nellie as freely as his breath would permit.

Without parley, he was seized and hurried off, Jack only pausing long enough to kiss Nellie, and tell her to be of good cheer.

Although Judge Vermilye cursed and raved, he was obliged to march along, for Jack Sphinx never took hold of a man but what he had to go.

Luckily for the judge's pride it was late at night, and the streets were nearly deserted, and he saw no one that he knew, or that knew him, save it were the officers pacing their beats, or an occasional bearded laborer who had staid up too late with his toddy.

Into the Central Station Judge Vermilye was conducted, and Jack stated the charges against him, after which he was remanded to a cell in the jail,

until the morrow, when his hearing was marked to come on, tenth in order of arrest.

At his request, however, the news was sent to his daughter, that she might be present with funds for bail.

When the judge's case came on in the morning the court-room was crowded, and many of his friends and acquaintances were present, which was gall and wormwood to the haughty, proud judge.

The prosecution was conducted by Jack Sphinx, detective, in a clear and concise manner. He stated how he had chanced to call upon Miss Morton in the nick of time to prevent her being murdered by the prisoner; how he had secured his arrest, and with the aid of an officer, "caged him."

Nellie Morton was then called on to testify, and related her story in a plain, truthful manner that could but cause a good impression upon her audience. She gave her testimony in accordance with the facts stated by Jack.

Judge Vermilye offered no objection, and the judge adjourned the case, releasing the prisoner on bail, which was not hard to obtain, for Vermilye was a popular man, and popular men never lack friends.

So the judge went back to his home in a carriage, with his aristocratic daughter, while Jack Sphinx conducted Nellie back to her home.

"I'm thwarted, this time," he said, gloomily, "for that case will never be called on again, or if it is, the judge will allow Vermilye to wriggle out of it, somehow. Money, you know, darling, goes a great way, and he has more than enough to buy off our courts. But never mind. I'll nab him, yet!"

Judge Vermilye rode home.

As he was leaving the carriage before his own residence, a passer-by brushed rudely against him, and a low voice said:

"Beware! the law will not always be as lenient with you as now!"

A curse escaped the banker's lips, for he recognized the same cool, inscrutable individual he had met in Mike Keene's Club—Watch-Eye, the Shadow!

CHAPTER VI.

A BANK ROBBERY—GERALD TRACY'S RETURN.

You may not know, dear reader, but detectives will tell you of a place where they do congregate, to read, learn, and inquire. In Philadelphia, it is upon Walnut street, front room, first flight.

A large apartment, carpeted, and furnished with easy-chairs, couches, tables and a stove, while the walls are literally covered with photographs and newspaper portraits of notorious murderers, house-breakers or cracksmen, petty thieves, shop-lifters, and incendiaries.

Of course, being a "men's" room, where the tidying hand of woman seldom reaches, the place is not remarkable for its cleanliness or order, and when occupied, as at present, by a half dozen men, is generally enveloped in a fog of tobacco and cigar smoke.

"Here, in the 'Quarters,' we have an opportunity of gazing upon the features of several well-known Quaker City sleuths, all of whom have won for themselves a name, and in many cases, a nick-name, among their fellows.

Half a dozen are distributed about the room; let us notice them.

The elderly, well-dressed gentleman there by the fire, is "Colonel" Brownell.

He has a fine head, a kindly face, and an intellectual forehead; yet this quiet, unassuming man ranks high in the profession, and those long whiskers he wears so naturally can be removed without the application of the razor, for they are false.

That man playing with the long ears of a hound, by the window, is "Joe Ferret," alias Ransom McDonald. He is not generally known as a detective, which adds to his value as a "ferret."

Harry Scott, yonder, is a railroad detective, in which line of the profession he is successful. Then there is Pat Haines, Sam Sharp, "Mary" Wallace, and Hi Osgood, all of them to be depended upon, when put upon a trail, while "Dr." Danton, in the corner, yonder—the man with the gold-rimmed glasses, is a street-car "spotter." Jack Sphinx, new member, completes the collection present, most of whom are smoking and reading.

Pipes are laid aside, heels lowered from promiscuous elevations, and newspapers dropped, as the door is opened to admit—a woman.

Yes, a genuine live woman, enveloped in a cloak and veil-trimmed hat.

Let me introduce you, dear reader, to Kate Carson—otherwise the "Clipper." She, too, is a detective, and as successful as any of her male brethren.

A modest, quiet little woman she is, of some twenty-four or five years, with a fair, pleasant face, and eyes as black and bright as lumps of coal.

Every man arose and bowed respectfully on her entrance, and Jack Sphinx handed her a chair near the door.

"Thank you," she said, in a pleasant voice, in which there was a trifle of hesitation, "but I didn't come to stay. I came to inquire after the gentleman known as Jack Sphinx."

"That's I, ma'am, at your service," Jack hastened to assure her. "Wish to see me in private, I suppose."

"Not necessarily. All these gentlemen are detectives, are they not?"

"They are, and I'll guarantee they never meddle with each other's affairs, other than in a helping way. State your case, and I will give you all attention."

"Well, within the last six months, the — Bank, on — street, has been robbed of sixty thousand

dollars of the money intrusted in its care. Not only has the bank's own pile been tampered with, but the private safes and vaults of depositors and renters, have been relieved of liberal sums."

"Has this thing been going on any great length of time, Miss Carson?"

"Six months or so, says the President, Mr. Fowler. The robbery is done systematically, either by some one in the employ of the bank, or some parties who have gained secret access to it."

"True enough. Have you taken the case, then?"

"Yes, providing I can secure your help in working it up. The Chief of Police recommended you, saying you might be able to help me."

"That's good of the chief. Of course I am willing to tender you my assistance, although I am comparatively young in the business. I should like to see the President of the bank."

"Then we will call upon him. He wants the case investigated at once, before the report of the loss leaks out among the depositors."

Accordingly they both set out from the "Quarters" for the — Bank, which was some blocks away.

Once upon the street, Kate Carson spoke not concerning the case, nor did Jack, for they had learned among the foremost things in their experience that a floating word upon the highway is liable to reach some person who remembers it, thinks over it, and finally arrives at a conclusion. Conclusions are what detectives spurn as things unsafe to trust.

A short ride in the cars, and a short brisk walk, brought them to the bank in question, and the "Clipper," as Kate Carson was familiarly known, demanded to be shown to the President's private room.

Thither they were conducted, the apartment being in the rear of the banking room, and furnished with elegant taste.

Taking seats the two detectives waited, and in the course of several minutes, President Fowler was shown in.

He was a portly, intelligent looking man, with an honest face and kindly bearing; his face was covered with a sweeping beard, and his eyes were clear and searching in their glance.

He bowed pleasantly as he entered to Kate, who in turn introduced Jack.

The banker gazed at the young detective with a keen glance.

"This is the man you have chosen as your assistant, Miss Carson?" he interrogated, turning to Clipper Kate.

"It is, sir. Mr. Sphinx was recommended to me by the chief of police."

"Perhaps he will do as well as any other. Have you any questions to ask, Mr. Sphinx? All detectives generally have."

"Yes, a few," Jack replied, tersely, not at all disconcerted by the banker's tones. "Let me have a sheet of paper to jot down an occasional item on. That's it, thanks. Now, you I suppose are the President of this bank?"

"I am, sir."

"Who is Vice-President?"

"Honorable Felix Vermilye."

Jack gave vent to a little whistle of surprise, and made a memorandum upon his paper.

President Fowler looked annoyed.

"Your whistle would go to show that you think Judge Vermilye is a man to be classed among the suspicious, eh?" he demanded, sharply.

"In my business, sir, no man, be he saint or sinner, is beneath my notice, I allow!" Jack replied, evasively. "Who are the directors, please?"

President Fowler named them, and Jack jotted down their names and residences.

"Are they in the secret of this robbery?" he next asked.

"They are, most assuredly."

"And, the Vice-President?"

"He is. Why?"

"Nothing. Only thought I'd ask. Who are the tellers?"

"Jackson Way is the receiving teller, and Philip Rossmere, the paying clerk."

"None others have the handling of money—none of the book-keepers?"

"Not to our knowledge. Judge Vermilye has the whole supervision of the books under his eye."

"You look them over, too, I dare say?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Ever find anything wrong?"

"No, sir. Books all O. K."

"Do you ever entertain visitors in the bank, or admit others than employees behind the grates?"

"Miss Vermilye occasionally favors us with a call; also my wife and daughter."

"Call in this Way and Rossmere, please. I can tell you if they are the men."

President Fowler touched a call-bell, and the two tellers were ushered in at his request.

"Messrs. Way and Rossmere," he said, "allow me to make you acquainted with Miss Carson, detective—ditto, Mr. Jack Sphinx."

The two men acknowledged the introduction with bows, and were seated.

Jack Sphinx gazed at them in a peculiar scrutinizing way, then turned to the President.

"You may dismiss the gentlemen," he said, calmly. "I have done with them."

Which Mr. Fowler did, with a bow, and they quitted the room.

"Well?" he demanded, after they had gone, "what is your decision?"

"It is reserved, at present. I should like you to show me through the bank, and the safes and vaults to see if they've been tampered with, yet. The rest, Miss Carson and I will work out, ourselves."

Their request was granted, and they were shown

through the entire building from basement to garret, by the President, in person.

Jack and Clipper Kate each used their eyes sharply, and at last every portion and apartment had been shown them, and they passed out onto the street, through the bank.

Judge Vermilleye was engaged at writing on one of the desks, and pretended not to notice them, but Jack Sphinx knew that he was aware of their presence.

Out in the street, once more, Jack turned to Clipper Kate, inquiringly:

"You may call upon me, at your leisure, and we will compare notes and opinions. Two heads are better than one, they say, and perhaps we may strike a lead. I live at —, Spring Garden street, upstairs."

"Very well. Look for me at almost any hour during the evening."

They parted then, Kate going into Market street and Jack into Chestnut, where he sauntered idly along, his thoughts busied with other matters than the gay whirl of life around him.

"Let me see," he mused. "To-day is the release-day of Eurastus Racket from the Inebriates' Home. I wonder what effect the year has had upon him, poor fellow? I promised Nellie I'd look after him occasionally, and here I've not been near the place, since the morning I procured his admission. I believe I'll go and find him now."

To think was action with Jack Sphinx, and he accordingly set out for the Inebriates' Home.

On his arrival, he was shown into the superintendent's reception room, and directly waited upon by the doctor in person—a gray-bearded, kindly-faced elderly gentleman, neat but not richly dressed.

"Dr. Mason, I believe?" Jack said.

"The same, sir. Your name is—?"

"Jack Sphinx, detective, at your service. A little over a year ago I brought a poor fellow here for treatment, and it occurred to me to-day, that I'd better call around and inquire after his welfare and condition."

"A year ago—let me see," the doctor said, musingly. "Why, it must have been the man, Racket?"

"The same—Eurastus Racket."

"Ha! ha! he was a strange fellow, 'pon my soul. At first he was quite sick, what with a running eye and craving for strong drink. But we soon had the eye out and a new one in its place, and in six months the taste or smell of liquor was nauseating and disgusting to him. He improved rapidly, and our drunken vagabond turned out to be a gentleman of culture and intelligence, who evidently had seen better days in a past of which he was careful not to speak. The last two months of his stay, he delivered some excellent lectures on Temperance to the inmates of our asylum, and made a deep impression upon them. I tried to prevail upon him to remain longer, but he would not, claiming that he had a great wrong which must be righted. I expect he has been greatly sinned against, in the past, and is now about to fight to the bitter end, for his rights."

"Then he is not here?" Jack asked, disappointedly.

"No; he took leave of us, several days ago. He often spoke of you and a young lady called Nellie, and wished he could see you."

So Jack was obliged to take his departure, without finding out any more concerning the tramp.

Judge Vermilleye dined at three, as a usual thing, but to-day a pressure of business detained him later, so that it was nearly dark ere he left the carriage in front of his own mansion, and ran up the steps.

Miss Beatrice and Marquis De Haven were amusing themselves at the piano, in the grand parlor, but, instead of stopping, the banker ran up-stairs to his suite of rooms, making his toilet in his elegantly-appointed boudoir, and then entering his grand library.

He started back with an oath as he did so, for a man was seated in one of the judge's own luxuriously-upholstered arm-chairs, with his feet perched up against the book-case, engaged in smoking a cigar.

He condescended to lower his feet upon the judge's entrance, and arise from the chair, with a bow, after which he resumed his seat.

Vermilleye uttered another oath.

The man was Watch-Eye, the Shadow!

"You here!" the banker cried, a spice of threat in his tones. "What fetches you here, sir—in my private office, at that?"

"My limbs assisted me here, if I remember correctly," Watch-Eye replied, coolly. "Be seated, Judge Vermilleye, instead of working yourself into needless passion. I want to have a little private talk with you, you see."

The banker dropped into a chair, his face grown a shade white, and a strange glitter in his eyes.

"Well?" he said, interrogatively. "I am listening to what you may have to say. Go ahead."

"Yes. Allow me to offer you a cigar, first, as it improves a man's memory, and I desire that yours shall be very good, upon this occasion, you see. What! don't smoke?"

"Not with you, sir. Go on with what you have to say."

"Very well. To open matters in a business-like way, just cast your mind and memory back for a period of nineteen years, to a certain 10th day of May. Where were you upon this day and date?"

"In Philadelphia, sir, doubtless, as I have never been beyond a radius of a few miles from the city!" Judge Vermilleye replied, calmly.

"You are sure you were in Philadelphia, nineteen

years ago to-day?" Watch-Eye demanded, watching his honor, keenly.

"Quite sure!" the banker replied.

"You have no recollection, then, whatever, of a little transaction which occurred in Baltimore, on said day, in the office of one Silas Pry, money-lender—a case wherein said Pry, in consideration of a mortgage given upon a Southern plantation known as Riverdale, by the heir and owner, Gerald Tracy, paid into said Tracy's hands the sum of fifty thousand dollars?"

"You speak in riddles, sir," Judge Vermilleye replied, haughtily. "I know nothing concerning the transaction of which you speak, neither was I ever in the city of Baltimore!"

"You lie, sir!" Watch-Eye hissed, turning fiercely upon the banker.

"What! what!" and the judge, springing to his feet, reached for the bell-handle. "You give me the lie, sir. You villain, I'll have you kicked from my house!"

But Watch-Eye sprang and hurled him back.

"You lie, Silas Pry!" he repeated. "You lie, and I know it—know you, for I am Gerald Tracy!"

CHAPTER VII.

VERMILLEYE HOLDS THE STRONGEST HAND.

"GERALD TRACY!" the banker repeated, his face assuming a grayish pallor—"you, Gerald Tracy?"

The same, alive and well, thank God, the Shadow-detective said, triumphantly.

"Sit down, Silas Pry, *alias* Judge Vermilleye, and hear me out. I know you, even under your high sounding exchange of cognomen. You also know me, but not so much of me as you will directly. Sit down, while I rehearse you a little story. It is very beautiful and pathetic in its everyday occurrences—almost like you will read of in Sunday-school books!"

The sarcasm in the man's tones so affected Vermilleye, that he dropped into a chair, his teeth closing with a click, and his hand involuntarily nearing a hip pocket.

"Oh! you needn't mind the weapon," the Shadow said, coolly; "it is not necessary, for ere you could draw it, I can put half a dozen bullets through you. I long ago learned the art of quick trigger for such occasions as this."

"But to return to my little romance in real life. Nineteen years ago to-day, I applied to you for a loan of money. I had been living high, and not only used up my own ready cash, but, in a blind moment appropriated fifty thousand dollars of the bank's cash, where I was employed. Discovery followed, and I was offered a chance to redeem myself and save disgrace and imprisonment, by returning the money I had appropriated."

"In this desperate strait I came to you, whom I knew to be a money-lender, and tried to borrow the sum. You were willing to lend me the fifty thousand, providing I would give you a mortgage on my southern estate, Riverdale, for the amount of seventy-five thousand dollars. I was forced to accept your hoggish terms; I gave the mortgage, received the money, paid it over to a detective in your presence, and took my departure."

"I had been ordered by my employers to leave the country for five years, and I resolved to seek the far-western gold fields, to dig out of the earth riches enough to redeem Riverdale."

"And according to my resolution, I immediately took my departure from Baltimore, for the West. In bidding adieu to the East, I left behind me a little babe, and a wife, in Washington, dependent upon my wife's needle-labor for support. I had written to them, explaining all, and promising a speedy return. On reaching the West, I wrote them several letters, but got no answer. Again and again I wrote, but still no answer came from my loved ones."

"At last I despaired of hearing from them—God forgive me, but I believed that my wife had turned from me, because of the social downfall I had caused her, and had returned to her people."

"So, Silas Pry, I slaved on in the mines. More than a score of times did I face death, and narrowly escaped it. I learned at last that my enemies were but tools in your hands—that you were plotting away my life, that I might never return to pay off the mortgage. For ten years I battled with and baffled your bull-dogs; then they disappeared, and I was troubled no more."

"Over a year ago, I returned to Baltimore and Washington, in search of you and my family. In Baltimore I learned that you had years before left that place, and returned to Philadelphia, which, if I remember right, is the city of your birth. On inquiring after Riverdale, I learned that it had trebled in value in the last eighteen years, and was worth at least a couple of hundred thousand dollars, being in close proximity to the city."

"I then set out for Washington, and there received the worst blow of all. My wife had married one Judge Vermilleye only a few years after my departure, and had since her marriage suddenly died. Of my child I could find no trace—no word—nothing! She was dead or lost—research disclosed no facts concerning her after my departure for the West."

"These discoveries disheartened me, for what had I to live for—and I took excessively to strong drink: I became a drunkard, a sot, a tramp, on the face of God's footstool. No one knew me, no one cared for me—and I was happy only in my cups."

"A year ago, Silas Pry, I entered this mansion, when it was a scene of festivity upon the occasion of a party. You had me unceremoniously thrown out, and even sent a tool of yours after me, to end my miserable career. Somehow he failed to complete his task, and I was picked up and cared for. You see my left eye is a game eye. I owe the loss of the optic to you, but I love you so much that I can well

afford to forgive you—oh! yes. As I was saying, I was picked up and cared for—was even induced to enter an inebriate asylum, to get cured of my appetite for strong drink. I went and was cured. You see me here before you, to-day, Silas Pry, ready to redeem that mortgage on Riverdale—you see me here before you, a free man, able and willing to fight you to the bitter end!"

There was a dead silence in the room as Gerald Tracy finished speaking, and both men sat glaring at each other in a way that was evidence that they had no love for each other—that they were destined to be deadly foes, from now on to the end.

Judge Vermilleye spoke at last, a cool, devilish smile upon his face.

"I have heard you through, Gerald Tracy, and, now, tell me, if you please, how are you going to prove my identity with Silas Pry, of nineteen years ago?"

"Easily. But that has nothing to do with my present business here. Be you Silas Pry, Judge Vermilleye, or the Devil, you have a mortgage against Riverdale, and I have come to pay it off."

"Have you ever thought how much you owe me, then?" the banker demanded.

"Yes, I have been figuring it over and over for nineteen years—I ought to know, certainly. One hundred and sixty thousand five hundred dollars, is every cent I owe you."

"And are you ready to settle this claim, now?"

"I am. My nineteen years of banishment have not been spent idly, and I can no doubt pay off several such mortgages."

Judge Vermilleye arose and paced to and fro, his eyes fixed upon the carpet, a terrible glitter in them.

He was struggling with an evil and a good spirit.

Should he yield up Riverdale, with all its wealth and beauties, or should he turn and smite down this claimant as he had the power to do?

No! he would not yield, after all these years of triumph—he would not yield and allow Gerald Tracy the satisfaction of a single triumph. He would fight with the aid of the Evil One—light as man never fought before—and win!

He felt sure that he would win.

"Gerald Tracy!" he said, pausing before the returned wanderer—"Gerald Tracy, you are reckoning without your host, in coming back here to claim that which was once yours. You are confident that by shrewd perception you have turned the tables upon me, but let me dispel this idea. The mortgage shall be foreclosed, and Riverdale is mine. I defy you to get it away from me. Try it if you think you can, and I will have you arrested and cast in prison before the sun sets to-morrow. Ha! ha! you'll find that Silas Pry still holds the winning hand!"

Tracy's turn it was now to be surprised.

"You have me arrested!" he gasped. "You have me arrested? Explain yourself—what have I ever done to you?"

"Nothing particularly to me, my dear Tracy, but you see, there is a little charge against you up in Washington, which remains unsettled from nineteen years ago—a mere trifling matter, but sufficiently criminal to cause your arrest and imprisonment for a number of years to come. Cause?—oh! a small theft from the bank, I believe, of some fifty thousand dollars!"

And the villain laughed, satirically.

As for Gerald Tracy he staggered to his feet, the whole damnable plot bursting upon his mind with the closing words of his enemy.

"What! what is this you would say?" he gasped, his face deadly white, his one eye seeming to blaze, his whole brain seeming on fire—"was not the money I gave the detective paid the bank, in Washington?"

"It was not!" Judge Vermilleye said, with triumphant emphasis—"it never saw the inside of that Washington bank; I dare say—certainly not to pay off your indebtedness. It of course was all owing to my shrewdness. If you had been a mouse, in my office, nineteen years ago to-day, after you had taken your departure, you might have overheard or witnessed a bargain between myself and the detective, McQuaver, wherein we were to equally share the fifty thousand dollars, and he was to make pretense of continuing the search for you in behalf of the bank, but was in reality to find and put you forever out of the way, whereupon I was to pay him an additional ten thousand dollars!"

"My God, man, I never deemed you such a villain!" the Shadow gasped, in righteous horror.

"No one else did," the banker replied, coolly. "A smooth face, a smoother tongue, and scrupulous honesty in all my dealings, has won me the reputation of being a square man."

Gerald Tracy groaned aloud, as he sat with bowed head, his eye riveted upon the carpet. He was a fool not to see that he was completely in the power of one of the most devilish of all schemers. He knew that Silas Pry had matters all in his own hands if it were as he had said.

"Well?" he demanded, interrogatively, what do you intend to do?"

"I intend to use my power over you to the fullest extent, providing you make any stir. You are a thief, to-day, the same as you were nineteen years ago. In the hands of the chief of police at Washington lies a warrant for your arrest on the charge of bank robbery. Dare you to annoy me again, and you shall suffer the full penalty, for every crime."

"And you—you mean to hold Riverdale?"

"Yes. I shall foreclose the mortgage at once, and sell the place to get back my money and the interest thereon. If it goes for over two hundred thousand dollars, let it go. If for less, I shall bid in, and pay whatever it sells for, above my claim."

"But you cannot keep over the amount due you on the mortgage?"

"No, probably not, for the bank stands ready to claim any amount it may bring above my claims."

"Then, I have no claim whatever?"

"None, whatever. Your only plan of safety is to lay low, as every thief does. If you come forward to oppose the foreclosure of the mortgage, your fate is sealed. Off to prison you go, as fast as justice can carry you."

"But you are counting it all against me. I have a few points against you. I have your own confession of all your villainy, which would lower your high head, somewhat, when taken into court. Besides, there's a charge against you, in court, now for attempted murder."

Felix Vermillye smiled, villainously, and snapped his fingers.

"A fig for the latter case, while of the former you have no proof. We are alone. No one has overheard us. My word in law would stand better than yours, for you are a thief!"

The next minute the banker regretted his hasty speech, for Gerald Tracy leaped suddenly from his chair upon him, and grasped him by the throat.

"Curse you!" he grunted, his face livid with passion, "you have said that thing once too many times. Do your worst! I defy you—doubly defy you. Beware! With God's aid I will fight you, Silas Fry, and if I am beaten, I'll break every bone in your body, if I hang for it the next minute. Beware, I say! A desperate man has no mercy upon a foe, and I shall have none upon you. I will live yet to crush you—to baffle and disgrace you to that extent that you will gladly seek death in preference to a miserable existence. I go no, but you have not seen the last of me. A very fiend in my pursuit of revenge, I will hunt you down to a pauper's grave!"

During his wild, excited speech the returned wanderer had tightened his grip about Vermillye's throat until his eyes protruded from their sockets, and his tongue hung from his mouth.

And as he finished, he raised the portly banker from the floor, bodily, by the powerful strength of his arms, and hurled him half-way across the room. He struck the floor with a crash, and lay there, quivering, his senses having deserted him.

"Lie there, you accursed villain, and taste the beginning bitterness of my battle with you!" Tracy grunted, as he seized his hat, and stole from the house.

It was some time before the stricken banker could be called back to consciousness by the servants who had seen him through the open door, lying prone on the floor, soon after the Shadow's departure.

When he finally did recover his senses, he peremptorily dismissed them all, and remained in his library for some time before going out for his usual evening in town.

He was very sore from this fall, but was more sore in temper than in body.

"Curse take the fellow," he growled, as he paced to and fro through his elegant library, "he was as savage as a tiger. He said he was desperate, and I am of the opinion that he was. He bade me beware. Yes, Gerald Tracy, I will beware. I'll cage you where you can do no harm, and that, ere long. You are too dangerous a stumbling-block to lie in my path. I'll see that you are removed. And then, I'll foreclose the mortgage on the southern plantation, and pocket the cash."

"A snug little investment, that was, after all. Twenty-five thousand for the use of fifty a matter of nineteen years, and then the interest amounts to a hundred and sixty, and five hundred more. Ha! ha! ha! I could not have done better, had I leased the money by pieces. For Riverdale is surely mine, now, and that is worth two hundred thousand, at least, though at auction sale I will chance its running above a hundred and fifty thousand. So much for your scheming, Silas Fry. But, another bit of devilry remains for you, and that is to get possession of Gerald Tracy's wealth. Get it I must, or he will beat me at my own game. And gambling, instead of outright theft must be my way of reaching him. There is a man here, who they say can beat the best, and if he is not possessed of too conscientious scruples, he is my huckleberry. I will go and sound his depths."

CHAPTER VIII.

A SURPRISE—TWO ROGUES MEET—CAGED.

THAT evening Jack Sphinx called upon Miss Kate Carson, at her residence in Spring Garden Street. It was a cosy little two-story brick cottage, in the heart of the city, surrounded by many others greater in size and more imposing.

A little yard in front was inclosed by an iron fence, and under cultivation as a flower garden.

Upon ringing at the door, Jack was shown in through a hall to a little reception parlor, by a neat, pretty servant girl, where he was informed Miss Kate would presently join him.

The parlor was furnished after a neat but inexpensive fashion, with a bright crimson carpet, upholstered furniture, an upright piano, and a few modest pictures and paintings upon the walls. Then, there were numerous little nicknacks which served to adorn, all of which betrayed the skill of a woman's hand.

Jack Sphinx had not been seated long, when a door opened, and "Upper Kate" entered. She was attired in a loose toilet wrapper, prettily set off with ribbon bows; spotless linen cuffs and collar, and a handsome gold chain about her neck reaching to her watch-pocket.

Her hair was arranged becomingly, and altogether she appeared to great advantage, despite the fact that no one could have called her handsome.

She bowed with a smile, as she saw Jack, and seat-

ing herself, at once opened up on the subject of the interview.

"Well, Mr. Sphinx, who do you think is the bank robber?"

"I haven't made any direct decision, yet, Miss Carson. I have been waiting to catch your ideas, before allowing my crude experience to form into thought."

"Well, I can soon tell you my judgment in the matter. There are two buildings built against the bank—one upon the east and one upon the west side. The first named is occupied as a clothing store, and the latter as a pawnbroker's establishment. The latter is kept by one of that much-abused race known as Jews. Now, in my estimation, this robbery is done either by parties who have access to the interior of the bank through one of these side buildings, or by some one in the employ of the bank, who has charge of or access to the vaults of the company in that direction."

"Well, which do you think most probable?"

"The latter."

"And who the person or persons?"

"I don't know. That is for you and I to determine between ourselves. You questioned President Fowler concerning this man Vermillye, rather sharply, I took note."

"Yes, I did. My opinion of the man is not favorable, to say the most, albeit he may be innocent of complicity in this robbery."

"He may and may not. Did you discover anything particular, while being shown through the bank?"

"No, nothing. My eyes failed to see anything out of order."

"My eyes, then, are a trifle sharper than yours. See here, what I picked up, will you," and she held up a watch-key, with a low laugh.

Jack Sphinx took it, and glanced it over sharply. It was a patented key, bearing the patent mark, and the name of Jay Winterbrooke, Jeweler.

"Where did you find this, Miss Carson?"

"Upon the basement bottom, when we were visiting the vaults."

"Whom does it belong to?"

"I know that no more than you. I picked it up, thinking it might be useful."

"And so it may. But, now, we must dig in at the root of this matter. I have my suspicions firmly fixed upon Judge Vermillye, as being the depredator, but of course have no definite proof—no clew on which to cause his arrest. What course do you advise?"

"I have been thinking of one, which may pan out as important results as any other, and that is for us to conceal ourselves in the bank, at night, and learn what we can."

"Will the President allow this?"

"If I ask him, yes. If you will kindly wait here a few moments, I will go to his residence, half a block above, and ascertain."

Jack assented, and during her absence whiled away the time in looking over some books which lay upon the center-table. She was not gone long, he thought, when he heard her re-enter the house, and she came tripping into the parlor.

"I have triumphed, my dear Sphinx," she said, holding up a bunch of keys. "I have got a set of duplicates to every lock in the bank building. Now we will go and make a night of watching of it. Are you properly armed? You know it is ever well to be prepared."

"Yes, I am 'heeled,'" Jack replied, with a smile. "But in case we can get into the bank, will not the watchman along that beat raise a racket, and arrest us for the genuine bank robbers?"

"I guess not, when we show our badges. Do you know, the policeman on that beat, may be the very chap who knows all about this robbery?"

"Such a thing might be, and in that case, he, even, must not know of our presence in the bank."

"Right. We must watch our chance, and get in on the sly, or else we'll see no robbers to-night. Ten to one we shall not, anyhow."

Kate Carson wrapped herself in a heavy waterproof and hat; then they took their departure toward the bank.

On arrival there they had no trouble in gaining an easy entrance, without being disturbed or noticed.

Passing through the banking-room, Kate unlocked a door and they stepped into—the presence of half a dozen of armed, masked men, who instantly "covered" the two detectives with gleaming revolvers that were cocked with an ominous click! click!

Judge Vermillye left his own mansion, after receiving the harsh treatment at the hands of Watch-Eye, and hurried into town. Nor did he pause until he reached Nash's restaurant, where he partook of a goodly-sized meal of choice viands, the whole washed down with a bottle of champagne.

Then came a choice cigar, when the banker arose to leave the place. As he did so, he saw a portly, pursy individual, who, from his dress and manners, might have been mistaken for a statesman, or the president of a corporation, just entering the door. His coming seemed to affect the banker strangely, for he sunk back upon his chair, and gazed at the new-comer, speechless with surprise.

A smooth, fat face had this fellow, and he was dressed in the height of fashion—black eyes gleamed from his head, however, and Judge Vermillye remembered the face.

As the stranger was passing, the judge touched him upon the arm, and then made room for him upon an adjoining chair.

"Sit down here," he said, in answer to the fellow's look of surprise; "sit down here, I know you. I want to speak with you."

"Know me? Well, I guess you've mistaken your man!" the other replied, looking the judge over, with a criticising glance. "I am but recently in these parts."

"Some foreign dignitary I dare say, then!" Vermillye replied, sarcasm in his tone. "An emperor, ambassador, or mayhap a nobleman."

The man uttered a growl, and then turned squarely upon the judge.

"Who are you?" he demanded, surlily.

The judge smiled, craftily.

"Is it possible that you have forgotten your old friends so soon?" he said. "I should have known you had I seen you sitting upon a king's throne. My name is Vermillye, sir, *alias* Silas Fry. Yours is Bill McQuaver, *alias* what?"

The fat gentleman started angrily.

"You lie! I am not McQuaver!" he replied.

"You are," the judge declared. "Come! come! no more denial now, but go on and tell me where you have been, since eighteen years ago."

"Well, since you won't take no for an answer, let's step into the theater below here, and secure a box, where we can talk unmolested and unheard. What do you say?"

"Lead ahead. Just as you say!"

Inside of ten minutes they occupied a proscenium box at the Chestnut Street Theater.

"As I was saying," the judge remarked, by way of opening the conversation, "I should like to know where you have been during the last nineteen years. Here you come back dressing and looking like the president of some great corporation, and putting on as much style as though you were worth half a million instead of being Bill McQuaver, a runaway detective."

"My name is Right Honorable David Thurston, at your service!" the ex-detective replied, grimly. "I have been around the world since I saw you last, and, as you suggested, am worth half a million of dollars."

"How did you summon up sufficient courage to come back into the States, when such a reward is set upon your head?"

"A reward upon my head?"

"Certainly—for feloniously appropriating the money paid you by Gerald Tracy and leaving for parts unknown."

"The devil, you say!"

"Yes. The charge stands against you, and I saw a policeman eying you, a bit ago, or I shouldn't have called you here."

"But you took the larger share of the money. Besides, you owe me ten thousand dollars, for that job against Tracy."

"Who is alive and well, to-day?"

"Not by a long sight. I shot him four times through the heart, and saw his body covered over with six feet of ground."

"Are you lying to me?"

"Upon honor, it is as I've told you."

"Then he has the nine lives of a cat, for certain it is that he has returned, and threatens to make trouble in camp. You must silence him, forever!"

"I must!"

"You must. If you refuse, I'll hand you over to the law as the thief who ran off with the bank money."

The ex-detective uttered an inaudible curse, and glanced nervously around.

He evidently had a dread of arrest.

"Curse you. What do you want me to do with him?" he demanded, "and what will ye do after I do get rid of him?"

"You can take your own remedy," the judge said, coolly. "I am not particular as to the method, so long as it is effective. After the job's done, my lips shall be sealed as to your past, and you shall have the money."

"You promise this?"

"Ay, I swear to it, if necessary."

"Where is this Gerald Tracy?"

"You must find him. Some call him Watch-Eye, because one of his eyes is a glass eye."

"I will find him. And I'll use a remedy that won't fail, this time."

Shortly after this the two separated, McQuaver going toward the upper part of the city, and Judge Vermillye in the direction of the wharves.

"Gerald Tracy's doom is sealed," he muttered, a horrible glitter in his eyes, as he moved along. "I shall be rid of him; McQuaver fairly upon his track he is a dead man—sure. Then, only a few remnants of a dark past lie in my way, and they can easily be removed. McQuaver, himself, for one; Jared Ogglesby for another. The girl, Nellie Morton, and the fellow Sphinx may give me trouble, unless I can quiet them, somehow. I think I can fix all these things to suit me."

It was an unexpected situation that Kate and Jack found themselves placed in, for they had not calculated upon being surprised in highway robbery fashion within the very walls of the bank, where they had come to lie in wait for stealthy criminals. Instead, they were now confronted by a half-dozen masked fellows, all enveloped in hooded oil-cloth coats, and armed with the revolvers which they leveled so suddenly upon the detectives, that neither had an opportunity to draw a weapon, ere they were "covered."

"You may as well surrender, and take matters rationally," one man said, stepping forward, apparently to distinguish himself as leader. "You've fallen into the trap you had prepared for us, and we shall see that you don't trouble us."

"What do you mean?" Jack demanded. "It is you who had better surrender, as you can never escape from this place alive. It is surrounded."

"A clever lie, but it avails you little," the leader

replied, with a sarcastic chuckle. "Were there ten thousand men on the outside, they could not prevent our leaving this bank. Come! hand over your weapons. It's your only choice."

Jack turned to Miss Carson, inquiringly, and she nodded her head.

"It is no use to resist. So let them do as they will, and we will work, afterward."

"You will, will you?" the leader said, craftily. "Oh! yes, no doubt. Seize them, boys; and bind their hands behind their backs, and blindfold them."

This was done, and as resistance seemed useless, under the circumstances, the detectives submitted, without knowing what fate was in store for them.

When they were secured according to the captain's orders, they were forced to walk forward through a number of rooms, and finally down-stairs, into the vault.

Here they paused.

"You are in the basement of the bank, where all the money is stored. You seldom visit the place, while we visit it often. I shall now extract a thousand dollars from the fund. Then you shall be taken away and confined, and the bank will lay this robbery, and possibly those heretofore, to you, and your names will be heralded abroad; you will be outcasts and outlaws upon the public. When you are thoroughly branded, and your names are in the mouths of everybody, we will turn you out upon the streets, to be gobbled up by the law."

"Curse you, do your worst, Judge Vermillye!" Jack Sphinx replied. "Though you wore a mask when I looked at you, I now recognize you by your voice. Ha! I fancy you start, and tremble, because you read the open revelation to the world."

"You err, young man," the leader replied, in a disguised voice. "I am not the man you believe me to be. So, in accusing Judge Vermillye, you will be doing an innocent man a great injustice—that is, if you ever escape. My name is Captain Jim Stavers, and my gang, here, are all professionals."

"Oh! that will do very well to feed the sparrows on, but sparrowhawks do not digest that order of grub!" Jack replied, sarcastically.

Then there was a silence, for a few moments, during which time the prisoners heard two of the gang move away along the aisle in which they seemed to be standing.

"Clipper" Kate Carson said nothing.

All that passed seemed to be received by her, but she gave expression to no sentiment whatever, either of dependency or regret that they had come and gotten entangled in such a difficulty.

Jack Sphinx was a little dubious of the ultimate results of their adventure, for he believed Judge Vermillye to be a person who would hesitate at no crime which would cover previous guilt, or add to his welfare and safety.

But he resolved to take matters as they came, without grumbling, and await the issues before drawing conclusions. Something might turn up.

The parties who had left the ranks soon returned, and then the whole gang moved off, taking Jack and his female pard with them.

For a mile, it seemed, they moved along a hard bottom; then three of the gang went off with Jack and Kate Carson, while the rest stopped. On through another series of passages; then there was a clanging as of iron gates, and the two detectives found themselves locked in a sort of dungeon, but separated by an iron grating. They were caged!

CHAPTER IX.

A HEINOUS SCHEME—MCQUAVER'S RESOLVE.

On the following day there was a great excitement at the Bank, upon the discovery that it had again been robbed.

Suspicious naturally turned upon Jack Sphinx and Kate Carson as the perpetrators of the theft, since they had been given duplicate keys to the bank, on the previous night, and were now nowhere to be seen.

Nor were they to be found, as a fruitless search proved. They had suddenly disappeared, as had a thousand dollars of the bank's money.

Several of the directors, together with President Fowler and Vice-President Vermillye, had assembled in the President's private office to discuss the matter.

"I think the case is clearly explained, now," Vermillye said. "These two detectives whom we employed, are the very ones who are robbing us, or, at least, are in league with a gang of professional thieves whom they are aiding and abetting."

"So it would seem," President Fowler confessed, thoughtfully, "and yet these robberies took place long before I sought detective aid."

"That may all be, but you stumbled on the very parties who were bleeding us, and employed them."

"What proof have you of this?"

"Why, the precious pair have escaped, and a thousand dollars are missing—isn't that sufficient proof of their guilt?"

"By no means. I do not believe in convicting people on circumstantial evidence. These detectives may be laying low in order to work up their case."

"Perhaps. But I shouldn't be afraid to wager that they'd never turn up again."

"Ah! Well, maybe they have been put out of the way by some one interested in the wholesale robbery business?" President Fowler suggested.

Judge Vermillye flushed, and sprang from this seat, angrily.

"Did I understand that to be an insinuation?" he demanded, hotly.

"Just as you choose to accept it, my dear Vermillye,"

ye," the President replied, coolly. "A man with a clear conscience, I have heard said, will not notice an insinuation."

The judge flushed again at the cut, but subdued his wrath.

"Perhaps you are right, and I should not have thought of such a thing. But I am naturally quick-tempered, to that extent that I am often ashamed of myself. I hope and trust these detectives may turn out all right, but I have my doubts. I know of a detective who can be relied upon, but I don't know as he could be engaged at present."

"No hurry," President Fowler replied. "I shall give the matter my personal supervision, and see what kind of a detective I will make. What, going?"

"Yes. My daughter was indisposed when I left, this morning, and I must drop in upon her while the physician is there."

This was an outright lie, but the judge regarded it as an exceedingly good way to obtain leave of absence, but, instead of going to his home, the banker made his way to East Callowhill street, and in one of the numerous grog-shops there to be found, hunted up Jared Oglesby, the man to whom Nellie Morton was bound.

He at last found him in a saloon, notoriously bad in the character of its patrons, and a dirty, filthy den at the best.

Jared Oglesby was the ideal of a thoroughbred miser. He was lank and lean, with pinched features, partly covered with a grizzly stubble of hair, a pair of little black eyes peered evilly from under a pair of overhanging brows; his nose was hooked and the color of a cherry upon the point, and his attire was ragged and filthy.

He was rather "full," but recognized Vermillye, with a tipsy nod.

"Mornin', judge. Have a smile o' gin?"

"No, I thank you, Jared. I do not drink the vile poison with which you saturate yourself," the judge replied. "Come, I want you."

"What d'ye want?"

"You shall know directly. Barkeeper, have you a private room, handy?"

"Yis, yer honor!" replied the Irishman, who dealt out the beverage for the establishment. "Here be the key, sur, an' yez'll find the room noomber twenty-seven, on the right av the hall. Five dollars, av yez might please."

"Go to the dogs!" Vermillye replied, taking the key, and throwing down a dollar. "There's enough for your old coop. Come along, Jared."

Vermillye then led the way through a dark, dismal, looking hall, until room 27 was found. He unlocked the door, and pushed Oglesby inside, entering himself and closing and fastening the door behind him.

He then took a seat in front of the miser, who had dropped into a chair.

"I have wanted to see you," the banker said, in a low tone, "for I have made an important discovery."

"What?" Oglesby demanded.

"You know all about the Gerald Tracy affair, for, believing you could be trusted, I have from time to time made you my confidant. Well, I have at last found the girl whom I have all along believed to be living—Tracy's daughter."

"Found her? Who is she?"

"Guess?"

"I am no hand at guessing."

"Well, you've heard of the row I had at the tenement, and how I was arrested for attempted murder?"

"Yes. Why did you try your hand on the gal?"

"Because, the girl whom you have bound to you under the name of Nellie Morton, is in reality Gerald Tracy's own and lawful child and heir."

"The devil, you say!"

"It is true. In a tussle with the girl I discovered a birth-mark upon her arm, which I remembered having seen upon the arm of the infant that I and Whack Butler stole from Mrs. Tracy's house, before my marriage to her."

"You are sure of this?"

"Positive. And, then, come to think, the girl resembles Tracy. I marvel that I never noticed it before."

"What became of Whack Butler?"

"Satan only knows. He went to sea, and never returned."

"I got the girl from a man in West Virginia. Don't remember his name now. It was over fifteen years ago."

"She is undoubtedly the original. And, to make matters still more interesting, her father is in this very city, and knows me!"

"Well, how does all this concern me, I should like to inquire?" Oglesby demanded, sharply, for, although he was soaked with liquor, he was keenly alert.

"It concerns you greatly," Vermillye replied, significantly. "There is work for you to do—dark work."

"Then I decline before you mention it. You know I am not partial to labor."

"But, you are a great miser, and I'll allow that you like to turn an honest or a dishonest penny, as well as the next one."

"Well, state your business. I'll argue with you, after I've heard what you want done. You know that I despise money, and only a very liberal sum can affect me."

"You are an old hypocrite!" Vermillye retorted, as if in disgust. "But to business. How much rent has the old tenement brought in, during the past year?"

Oglesby shrugged his shoulders.

"But a mighty little. Only a matter of a hundred dollars, what with dishonest tenants, and big taxes."

"What became of my money? You as agent had a right to keep but ten dollars on a hundred."

"All down, here," the miser replied, with a cunning grin. "All went for rum," and he laid his hand upon his stomach.

"You are a fine rascal to act as one's agent, ain't you? But, passing that aside, the old building is not paying me, and I've resolved to get my money out of it. Do you understand how I mean?"

"By fire?"

"Exactly! by fire," the banker replied, lowering his tone and lancing around, lest he should be overheard. "And I want you to do the job. The building is insured for two thousand dollars, and that is more than I should ever realize out of it, if it were to stand. Therefore, I want you to fire it. When it stands in ruins, and I get the insurance upon it, you call upon me and I will place five hundred dollars in your hands. And, hark you, Jared Oglesby," and the banker lowered his voice to a whisper. "If such a thing should happen that your bound girl, who is Gerald Tracy's daughter, should by accident—understand me, now—should by pure accident burn with the building, you would be richer by five hundred dollars more, making in all a thousand dollars."

"I think I understand you," the miser replied, a horrible smile coming upon his face. "In saying to you that you may depend upon me, I believe I have said enough."

"Quite," Judge Vermillye replied, rising triumphantly, to depart. "I will depend upon you."

A man was loitering about the docks at the foot of Walnut street that same night, not apparently having any object in so doing, more than to catch the refreshing breeze that blew off from the restless Delaware, for the night was sultry for May, and the sky was hooded in inky clouds, foreshadowing a storm.

Business had pretty much suspended, with the exception of a few oyster-venders who were closing out their stock in trade to an occasional late purchaser, or an occasional policeman who paced to and fro along Front street, which overlooks the river.

The man referred to was ordinarily dressed; a personage with long brown beard, which almost covered his face, and the bearing of a gentleman of leisure.

He carried a stout walking-stick, and a pair of eyeglasses were perched upon his nose, screening his eyes.

Ever and anon, he would stop to listen, as if expecting some sound or signal.

Finally he left the dock at the foot of Walnut street, and walked briskly along, until he arrived at the Market street ferry-house.

The boat from Camden had just arrived, and the passengers were disembarking in swarms.

Standing near the entrance to the ferry-house, the stranger watched the passengers as they came out, with a keen scrutiny that evidenced the fact that he was interested.

At last he seemed to fasten upon a man as being the one he wanted—a tall, powerfully-built individual, with an immense allowance of paunch, and the possessor of a pair of brown whiskers that rivaled the stranger's own.

The man with the big stomach, was in reality the ex-detective, McQuaver, in disguise.

McQuaver started away up Market, at as rapid a stride as this corporeity would allow, and the stranger dogged his footsteps with the pertinacity of a sleuth. If the ex-detective stopped into a store or a saloon, the stranger either stopped also, or loitered near, until his game came out and went on again.

In this way he continued to shadow the man with the great girth. If McQuaver was aware that he was followed, he did not betray his knowledge of the fact, but kept on up Market street, going west. Still the stranger followed, not many paces behind.

At last they came to the square of unfinished Public Buildings at Broad and Market streets, and by some error in usual customs, found the gate to the public transept left open.

Seeing this, McQuaver quickened his pace, and entered the gloomy portals of the massive pile of masonry.

This lost him temporarily from the sight of the strange pursuer, who still held his own, and shortly afterward left the street and entered the gloomy transept, himself.

After striding forward for a little ways, he paused to listen.

Footsteps were distinguishable at the further end of the transept, and appeared to be receding. Believing them to be the footsteps of McQuaver, the stranger hastened cautiously forward, until a figure sprang out upon him, from one of the dark alcoves, and a triumphant voice cried in a low, evil tone:

"Ha! ha! my gay copper, you're after me, eh? We'll see whether you git yer wants satisfied or not. Take that, cuss ye!"

And in the air above the stranger's head a long-bladed knife flashed threateningly.

But the murderous blow did no particular harm, for the stranger struck aside McQuaver's hand, and the knife but grazed his shoulder. The next instant the tables were fairly turned, for the stranger had McQuaver by the throat.

"No! no! Jack McQuaver, I am not satisfied," he gritted, savagely, while his gripe fastened tighter around the ex-detective's throat. "Instead of my falling into your hands, you have fallen into mine!"

A powerful man was the stranger, and withal a cool man. For, keeping one hand about the ex-detective's wind-pipe, he actually raised him, big as he

was, from the ground, and carried him up one of the gloomy aisles of the massive structure, until they were out of the way of chance passers-by. Here he laid him upon the ground, and placed one knee upon his breast, while a revolver silenced his would-be critics.

"Silence, now!" the stranger ordered, pressing the muzzle of his weapon to the ex-detective's cheek. "If you but give a squawk, I'll blow your brains out. Don't imagine I'm fooling, for I was never more in earnest."

"Let me up!" McQuaver growled. "You've got hold of the wrong man."

"No, I've got the right man. You are Bill McQuaver, and I know it. I heard you admit the same to Vermilyle—*alias* Silas Pry!"

"Well, what if I am McQuaver? What business or right have you to assault me in this manner?"

"The right of an injured victim of your thievish treachery—the right of a man who is seeking vengeance, through the aid of the law. Do you know me, sir?"

"No!" McQuade grunted, sullenly. "Let me up, or I'll whistle for the police!"

"Dare to try such a move, and I'll give you a dose of leaden electricity, such as you never experienced. So you don't know me, eh?—don't know the man you were seeking out, to murder. I am Gerald Tracy, or Watch-Eye, the Shadow!"

McQuaver started, his florid face paling, a trifle. "You?" he gasped—"you?"

"Yes, I! You may well tremble, you accursed rascal, for into prison you go, in less than an hour, unless you make a confession of your crimes, and place it in my hands."

"Implicating myself?"

"Yes, and also Silas Pry. Also, you must pay me fifty thousand dollars. Refuse, and into jail you go, for a straight ten years of your life."

McQuaver remained silent a few moments, as if turning over the situation in his mind.

"You promise to let me go, if, out of the money I have honestly made, I go and pay the bank, and clear you?" he demanded.

"You shall go free."

"Then, I'll do the fair thing by you. I've allus been haunted by that cussed bit o' villainy, and I've made up my mind to clear my skirts of villainy, and even though it beggars me, I'll square up, and turn over a new leaf. I scarcely believe I was ever cut out for a villain anyhow. When shall we start for Baltimore and Washington?"

"At once!" Watch-Eye said.

CHAPTER X.

BREAKING LOOSE—OLD PHILLIS.

We must now return to Jack Sphinx and Kate Carson, whom we left incarcerated, underground, in a dungeon, although they were ignorant as to the style of prison they were in, or its locale.

After locking them within the dungeons, the bank robbers took their departure and the two detectives were alone, separated by an iron barred partition. The robbers had neglected to release them of their bonds, and so they were left blindfolded and with their hands tied behind their backs.

Kate Carson was the first to speak.

"Are you there, Jack?" she called.

"Yes, I'm on hand," Sphinx replied, grimly. "How do you like your new quarters, over there?"

"I don't know, for I haven't been able to inspect them yet. My eyes are covered with a strong cloth."

"Ditto mine. And my arms are bound, too. But, if I can find a sharp stone, I can cut the ropes, and then release you. Then we can better inspect our new quarters, I guess."

The search for the sharp stone was fruitless, for the walls were all laid of smooth granite.

The next best thing was the iron bars, and Sphinx set to work, determined to free himself, somehow. But the sawing of his bonds across the edges of the iron was slow and monotonous work, and wearying, to that extent that he finally gave it up as a bad job.

He next tried to remove the bandage from before his eyes, in which he was successful, and was soon able to survey his surroundings.

He found that they were in an old disused cellar, half filled with old barrels and boxes, behind which the double dungeon had been built at some remote period, for what use was a mystery. A kerosene lamp swung in a bracket, just outside the dungeon door, and furnished the only light upon the subject.

It enabled Jack to see that there were no ways in which he could cut and free himself of his bonds.

Kate, he could see, was working to liberate her hands, but with poor success. The act of wearing out a strong rope by drawing it across a stone or iron bar, is not the most rapid work.

After reflection, an idea struck him which he resolved to put into execution.

He had a clasp-knife in his jacket-pocket, and if he could but get at this, he could perhaps manage to cut his bonds. But, with his arms tied behind his back, how was he to free himself—how was he to get at the knife?

There was but one way, and he resolved to try it. That was by lying down upon the floor, and attempting to stand upon his head, and in this manner *springing out* his knife.

To try the plan was easy, and he put the idea into execution. Lying upon his back, he turned a half-summerset, balancing himself for a second or two upon his head, with his heels in the air.

Click! the knife dropped from his pocket upon the hard bottom of the dungeon, and he had won! Dropping back upon his back, he wriggled along, until his pinioned hands came into contact with the

knife. He then arose to his feet, and it was not long ere he had the blade opened, and the cords severed, after which his arms were free!

"Loose, at last!" he cried, with a chuckle. "And, now, Miss Carson, if you will come to the grating, I will endeavor to reach through and free you."

Kate obeyed, and the detective managed to release her hands, after which she tore the covering from her eyes herself.

"Well, we're partly free at last," Jack said, "but there's no telling when we shall get out of this place. Iron bars are not as easily cut as a rope."

"True, but I do not intend to stay here, if I can help it. Do you think we could make anybody hear by yelling?"

"It is doubtful. This old basement seems to be very large, and a fellow might halloo till doomsday, without attracting attention, except from the rats. I can't imagine where we are."

"Nor I, but we are not far from the wharves, and possibly under some vacant storehouse. These cages have probably been used some time to cage wild animals for some menagerie."

"Yes, but not belonging to that race of creatures, I don't like the situation. We shall have to put our heads together, and form some plan by which we can secure our liberty?"

When Watch-Eye spoke as last recorded, he released his hold upon McQuaver, and allowed him to arise. He still retained his revolver in readiness, for he knew not but what the ex-detective might be playing the villain, despite his seeming earnestness.

"You can put up your weapon," McQuaver said. "I've nothing against you, and if you treat me half human, you can depend upon me."

"If you choose to carry out your proposition, that's all I care about you," Gerald Tracy said. "Faithfulness never goes unrewarded, and if through your means I become re-established in the world, you shall not lose by it. First come with me to my quarters, and we will arrange a confession."

McQuaver did not hesitate to obey, and accompanied the Shadow-detective to his lodgings which were in North 13th street. A large, pleasantly lighted room, tastily furnished, was what the Shadow called his quarters, and into which he conducted McQuaver, and handed him a seat at a desk, supplied with writing materials, while he himself took a chair close at hand.

"There are pens, ink, and paper," he said. "You may make out a confession. If I like it, all right; if not, I will destroy it and give you the trouble of writing the whole thing over."

Without demur the ex-detective set about his task. He was a good penman, and wrote rapidly, so that it was not many minutes ere he handed Gerald Tracy the document, of which the subjoined is a correct copy:

"Philadelphia, May 12, 18—.

"To President of — Bank, Washington, D. C.:

"DEAR SIR: You will probably be astonished on the reception of this, to learn that the warrant you hold for the arrest of Gerald Tracy, nineteen years ago an employee in your bank, prevents an honest man from coming forward to claim the rights of a citizen under his true name. For, understand you, Gerald Tracy is not indebted to you one farthing, he having on the tenth day of May, nineteen years ago, paid into my hands, according to your direction, the sum of fifty thousand dollars, which he had previously taken from the bank."

"This clears Gerald Tracy, and I recommend that you receive him back as an honest, law-abiding citizen, which I believe him to be. He has been absent from the East nineteen years, supposing all the time that his debt to you was canceled; but on returning and finding that it was not, has sought me out, and I have decided to make a clean breast of it. The money was paid by Tracy into my hands; then a devil came to me in the shape of one Silas Pry, and proposed that I keep a portion of it, and surrender the rest to him. I did so, and I fled to other parts of the world. But I have become tired of a roving life, and the thought that I am a thief; and hence I have resolved to clear Tracy and pay you one hundred and sixty thousand and five hundred dollars, which is the full amount, principal and interest of the debt I owe you; upon condition that you will sign a clearance paper, and return it to me by Mr. Gerald Tracy, promising never to take action against me or him."

"Wm. McQuaver."

This was what the document said, and what Gerald Tracy read, over and over several times.

"Is that all right, or is there something more you would have?" McQuaver asked, anxiously.

"It is enough," Watch-Eye replied, "and I thank you for it. I believe you mean to do better, and as long as I see that such is your intention you can count on me as a friend. There have been black spots in both of our lives, but I have confidence we can yet do enough good in the future, to atone for the wrong of the past. You intend that I shall present this to the President of the bank?"

"Yes. I will accompany you to Washington, and if they accept my terms, I will pay them the debt."

"No. You shall not do that, alone," Watch-Eye replied. "You pay what you took, with interest, and I will give you the rest. I shall get it out of Silas Pry, yet, or I am mistaken. And now, having arranged this, you can meet me at the depot, Broad and Washington Avenue, to-morrow morning, and we will catch the first train to the Capital."

After a few more words, McQuaver took his departure.

Bright and early on the following morning, Watch-Eye was at the Baltimore depot, and found the ex-detective there in advance of him.

Going aboard the first train, they were whirled away over the steel track, toward their destination.

"There are a few things I would ask you about," Gerald Tracy said, as the train glided along, "and that is concerning the death of my wife, who, I understand, married Silas Pry, after I left for the West. Have you information to give?"

"Very little bearing directly on the case, I am sorry to say," McQuaver replied. "I was hired by Silas Pry, as you may know, to follow you and put you out of the way, in order that he, Pry, might in the course of time, foreclose the mortgage upon Riverdale. Once or twice I received letters from Pry; in one of them he stated that he had married Mrs. Tracy; in another, that his wife had suddenly died. That's all I ever heard about it."

Gerald Tracy frowned in spirit.

"I wish I could find out how she died!" he said, his brows knitted in perplexity of thought. "I should be better satisfied."

"Why do you not hunt up old Phillis, the nurse woman. It occurs to me that she was in attendance upon your wife during her last sickness."

"Ha! if I could but find her. But is she alive, after all these years? Inquiry in Washington might or might not find her."

"We can try, at least," McQuaver said. "Although not much acquainted in Washington, I know where the old wench used to live, and it will do no harm for us to visit the locality."

"God bless you! You are indeed a friend in an hour of need," Watch-Eye replied, warmly grasping the ex-detective's hand. "We will go and perhaps find the negress. If I could but find my child, the happiness of my future would drive away the dark clouds of my past."

Arrived in Washington, the two men set faithfully to work, to discover the abode of the negro, Phillis.

A visit to the spot where McQuaver had once known her to live, resulted in finding no trace of her. She had long since moved to other quarters.

In their disguises both McQuaver and Gerald Tracy passed through the streets of Washington, without detection, for after nineteen years nobody knew them, nor did they see many that they knew.

Turning away from several places where the negress had once lived, they sought out the city directory, and together scanned its pages, eagerly.

There were Phillises of every name, seemingly, but only two whose occupation corresponded with the previous business of the Phillis they wanted.

One of these was Phillis Bohee, dry nurse, and the other Phillis Washtoe, wet nurse.

They lived in the same section of the city, and our two friends decided to pay them each a visit, before trying the other Phillises.

A visit to Phillis Washtoe, who came first on the route, resulted in finding a negress with half a dozen little negroes tied to her skirts. Inquiring if she had ever nursed one Mrs. Judge Vermilyle, or Mrs. Silas Pry, McQuaver and Watch-Eye were informed in the negative. So bidding Mrs. Washtoe good-day, they set out in search of Mrs. Bohee, whom Mrs. Washtoe believed to be the right party.

"I have almost d spaired of finding any clew," Watch-Eye said, as they walked along. "Ten to one the next one will not be the one we seek."

"I have faith that she will be the one," McQuaver replied.

And so they went on until they came to the residence of Phillis Bohee. It was a dirty-looking house in which she lived, but there were no children about.

McQuaver's rap was answered by a trim mulatto girl of seventeen, who politely invited him to enter.

Inside everything was neat and clean, but showed that poverty was not a stranger there.

An old negress sat crouching before the stove, clad in rags. She was as black as a coal, and well preserved, but was evidently in her second childhood.

The girl handed the visitors chairs, and then awaited in respectful silence for them to state their errands.

"Which one of you is Phillis Bohee?" McQuaver asked, glancing first at the old woman, and then at the girl.

"I'm Phillis Bohee—who wants me?" the old woman said, looking up from the fire, abruptly. "Who wants me?"

"I want you to answer me a few questions, my good woman," the ex-detective replied. "One of them is: were you ever employed as nurse to Mrs. Judge Vermilyle, of this city?"

"Vermilyle—Vermilyle?" The negress muttered, thoughtfully. "Let me see: was it many years ago?"

"Yes—a matter of sixteen, or so. Vermilyle's wife died very suddenly, you know. Her previous name was Mrs. Tracy."

"Oh! yes—yes, I remember now. Yes, I nursed Mrs. Tracy several times."

"Did you ever hear her speak about her former husband?"

"Oh! golly, yes. She tell me all about him. She tell me how he run away an' leab her, and den she hear of his deatth, an' den somebody stole her baby; yes, an' she mourn an' grieve her pretty eyes out for her poor first husband an' child."

"Did she ever say how she came to live with Vermilyle? how she came to marry him?"

"No! she nebber say much about him. He treat her wuss'n a slave master used to treat his niggers. He pound and abuse her drefful, and threaten to kill her."

"Curse him!" Watch-Eye fairly hissed, in terrible anger as he listened to the simple story of the wench. "He shall yet suffer, even as she suffered."

"This is Mr. Tracy, who was the first husband of Mrs. Vermillie," McQuaver explained. "We came to find you, and learn if possible of what Mrs. Vermillie died. We have both had suspicions that foul play might have caused her death."

"Yes, yes, I allus sez she did not die natural-like, but I hadn't any proof on it. Bress you, dough, missus dropped away orful quick, she did. She commenced ailin' on Monday, an' Saturday she was laid out in her coffin. Sez I to her:

"Missus, be all goin' right? Be you satisfied? Den she smile an' she sez:

"Look in under my pillow, after I'm gone, and you'll find a sealed package. Take it, an' if ever my child is found, give it to her."

"And this paper—have you it yet?" Watch-Eye demanded, excitedly.

"Yes, I've got it. Dolly, gal, jes' you go up in de garret and fetch down dat bandbox. De dockymment be in dat, onless de rats hab done gone an' eat it to pieces!"

CHAPTER XI.

FIRE AT OGGBESBY PLACE—JACK SPHINX'S BRAVERY.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

The cry rent the night in a piercing yell, from some stenorian voice.

"Fire!" the electric signal ran like chain-lightning to the many fire stations in the Quaker city; the District Telegraph flashed the news over their many wires; and one word "fire" made many a heart beat fast, for it meant destruction and desolation.

Only along the routes taken by the fire engines and trucks was the populace aroused, except in the locality of the fire; elsewhere the people slept on unaware of the conflagration, perhaps, until they should read of it in the morning papers.

The scene of the disaster was in no other building than that known as Oggbesby's tenement.

The whole place seemed ablaze. From every door and window the smoke poured in dense volumes, and occasionally a sharp tongue of flame would leap out into the night, as if reaching for a hold upon the opposite buildings.

The street in front of the old building was thronged with people, who surged to and fro behind the ropes that barred them out from reaching the burning building or touching such household effects as were being rescued from the doomed tenement. Men, women and children, many of them in their bare feet and night robes, as they had escaped from the fire; brawny policemen; yelling draymen, and the trumpet voice of brave firemen—all united in a series of howls and cries, that made the scene a pandemonium.

Still the fire waged on, within the building, and the smoke and flame poured out into the night. Streams of water were turned upon and into the building, without apparent effect; several daring "laddies" ventured into the building, but all to no avail. The dense volumes of smoke drove them back, nearly suffocated. All that could be done was to play the streams of water upon the structure until it was flooded, but it might take hours ere such flames yielded to the power of water.

Among the most excited upon the spot, was old Jared Oggbesby. He rushed frantically about, urging on the firemen, and acting more like a crazy person than aught else.

"Put out the fire! put out the fire!" he shouted. "Oh! my property is all gone and I am a ruined man! Five hundred dollars reward! five hundred dollars reward for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who set fire to my tenement."

But, none seemed to know any thing about the fire; the average spectator was pleased to see it burn, for it would give room for a better block.

But Oggbesby apparently bemoaned his ill-luck, in the bitterest terms, and swore bitter vengeance upon the incendiary who had fired his tenement.

The fire waged on. Stream after stream of water was being thrown into the building by the panting engines; still the smoke poured densely out.

"Are all out of the building?" the chief of the fire-department asked, as he wiped the black and perspiration from his face. "Count noses, and report at once."

This was done, according to orders; then up went a cry, from those who had been tenants of the block:

"Nellie Morton! Where's Nellie Morton?" "Nellie! my Nellie! Is she not here?" screeched Jared Oggbesby, rushing to and fro. "Somebody find her—look for her! Oh! God grant she is not in the burning building. It would kill me!"

A hurried search was made for the missing girl, and her name was shouted aloud, without eliciting a response.

In passing through the crowd in an apparent agonized search, a voice exclaimed in Jared Oggbesby's ear, in a low tone:

"What a cunning old hypocrite you are. I wish you success!"

The miser glanced around to catch a glimpse of Vermillie's exultant face, but a few feet away.

"Curse you," he muttered, and then went on.

At last it was decided that Nellie Morton was yet in the burning building, and word went from mouth to mouth.

Horror was upon everybody, seemingly, as they thought of pure, innocent Nellie being consumed in the flames.

But among all the firemen noted for their bravery, none were there who dared to enter that furnace of fire, even to save a human life. And, then, many argued that the poor girl had been suffocated with smoke long ere this. How could it be otherwise?

It was at this juncture, when all were in a state of terrified anxiety, that Judge Vermillie stepped

forth where all could see him, and raising his voice, said:

"It seems useless for man to buffet with fire, but if there is any person present who will bring Miss Morton out of the fire, alive, I will willingly give him a thousand dollars out of my own pocket, as a reward of merit."

A breathless silence ensued for a moment, except for the crackling of the flames and rush of water. Each person present was waiting for some other person to step forward and accept the judge's philanthropic offer.

Hark! a yell came faintly from down the street—then a man came rushing up, and forced his way through the crowd, to where the judge stood, and this man was none other than the young detective, Jack Sphinx.

"Curse you!" he cried, seizing the banker, and hurling him to the ground. "This is your hellish work! Nellie Morton!—where is she? Somebody tell me!"

"In the burning building," the fire chief replied. "It's useless to try to save her, for she is dead, long ere this!"

"No! 'tis not useless!" Jack Sphinx cried, as he seized a blanket and wrapped it about his head. "Now order your men to turn a stream of water on me."

The order was given and obeyed, and in an instant Sphinx was soaked with water.

He then seized an ax from a fireman's hand, and with a strange cry, dashed up the staircase leading from the street into the upper part of the tenement.

As he darted away, Judge Vermillie staggered to his feet, excitedly.

"Stop him! stop him! Arrest him, for he is Jack Sphinx, accused of bank robbery. A hundred dollars for his arrest. Will no one stop him?"

No one, evidently, for Jack Sphinx was lost to view in the burning building ere the banker had ceased speaking. No one would have followed him for love or money.

It was with breathless suspense that the excited spectators watched and waited. Would the gallant Sphinx ever come back from the fiery furnace into which he had ventured to save a human life? And, if so, would he bring Nellie Morton out alive?

These were the questions that ran from mouth to mouth—the all-important questions for the solution of which all were waiting.

Jared Oggbesby was suddenly missing. Perhaps the fact was unnoticed, but the miser had slunk away as if guilty of some awful crime.

Stealthily did the streams of water pour through the now paneless windows of the old tenement; eagerly the crowd surged forward, until the fire-patrol had to use their clubs to keep them back.

Judge Vermillie stood watching the smoking staircase, with horrible fascination, expecting, yet hoping against hope that Jack Sphinx would not make his reappearance with the form of Nellie Tracy—the daughter of the man the banker had so bitterly wronged.

Doomed, however, was he to bitter disappointment.

For, even as the burning floors within the brick walls fell with a crash, the form of Jack Sphinx came into view at the foot of the staircase, followed by a dense volume of smoke, and in his arms he carried the form of Nellie!

Then there went up a wild, tumultuous hurrah—a mad cheer of enthusiasm, such as never escaped from so many throats, probably, before. And the crowds surged forward, still making the night ring with their plaudits.

Jack Sphinx laid the inanimate form of Nellie upon a mattress which had been hastily spread and then turned—to find himself in the hands of several stalwart policemen.

"Mr. Sphinx, we arrest you in the name of the law!" one of them said, laying a hand upon the brave detective's shoulder. "You are accused of robbery, and we shall have to take you with us."

"Yes! away with him to prison!" Judge Vermillie cried, advancing. "He is the very man the Bank is looking for!"

"Hold! release that man!" cried a stern voice, and the Chief of Police, accompanied by President Fowler and Kate Carson, detective, stepped forward.

"Jack Sphinx has been proven guiltless of the crime charged against him, and I declare him a free man."

The officers obeyed, respectfully, and Judge Vermillie uttered a horrible oath, under his breath, at being thus foiled in the very hour of his supposed triumph.

Another cheer then went up for brave Jack Sphinx, and it was a rouser.

Seeing that he was expected to say something, the hero of the hour modestly stepped forward, where all could see him, and bowing, said:

"My friends, you do me unnecessary homage. I have simply done an act of duty which deserves no cheers. For your sympathy, let me, however, tender my thanks, and add a few words. That there has been foul play here, to-night, there can be no doubt. After penetrating to the apartments of Jared Oggbesby, whose bound girl Miss Morton is, I found her lying in an old closet, bound hand and foot, and gagged. Who is the author of this meditated crime? I leave it to you and the law to discover. I can only say that suspicion points to Jared Oggbesby."

A murmur of indignation ran rife among the crowd, and a arch was hastily instituted for the miser, but he had taken his departure, ere the knowledge of his attempted crime transpired.

Jack Sphinx turned to President Fowler and shook him by the hand.

"You arrived just in time to save me a trip to Moyamensing. How have you found out my innocence?"

"Through Miss Carson, here, who took myself and the chief, here, to the old storehouse cellar where you were concealed. We found that the wall of each cellar between the storehouse and the bank was provided with a sliding wall, and we also found some other things which throw the suspicion elsewhere. You had better look after your fire-wall, now, and then call on me as soon as possible."

Jack bowed, and turned his attention to Nellie. Ready hands had participated in an effort to restore her to consciousness, and had been successful, for she soon opened her eyes.

Kate Carson then called a cab, and with rescued Nellie, she and Jack left the scene of the fire.

The cab took them to Kate's own residence on Spring Garden street, and they were soon installed in the female detective's own pretty little parlor.

Nellie was very weak after passing through her terrible ordeal, and it was some time ere she could relate anything concerning the fire.

But she finally felt able to talk, and in answer to questions from Jack and Kate she said:

"As to the origin of the fire, I know only that Jared Oggbesby came home, carrying with him a gallon can of coal oil. He was in liquor, and when I asked him what he was going to do with the oil, he replied that 'he was going to set hell on fire.' Being used to his brutal talk, I paid no attention to him, and after I had finished my work, I went and threw myself down upon my bed, for my head ached terribly. I must have dropped asleep, for the next I was conscious of, was of being drawn rudely off the bed to the floor, and dragged along by the hair of my head. I then awakened to the realization that I was bound hand and foot, and gagged. I was dragged to the closet, and left, and then my guardian disappeared, and I saw no more of him. But I presently smelt the fire, and the horror of burning alive was so great to me that I lost consciousness."

"You believe that Jared Oggbesby fired the tenement?"

"Yes, I am well satisfied that he did. Moreover, I believe that he was hired to do it by a certain person who seems desirous that I should not live."

"You mean Judge Vermillie?"

"Yes. He attempted to take my life once, and would he not be likely to do so again?"

"Very likely. For the present, Miss Nellie, I shall assume your protection, and I guess I can induce Miss Carson to allow you to remain here, for the present."

"Certainly," Clipper Kate replied, eagerly. "She can assume control of my house while I'm out scouting, for you know, Mr. Sphinx, we've yet to discover the robbers of the bank. I am of the belief that we shall not have to search far."

The mulatto girl hastened to obey the command of Old Phil, and in the course of five minutes returned with the bandbox, which was well worn, and covered with cobwebs.

Phillis received the box, and began to overhaul its contents, which consisted of some rags, ribbons, papers and etcetera. She finally rescued a large red envelope from the mass, and handed it to Watch-Eye.

"Dar be the dockymment, Mars'r Tracy, jes' as dis old nuss received it."

"Thank God!" Watch-Eye ejaculated, as he tore open the envelope. "This may be the key to the mystery of my wife's death. Here, McQuaver, you may read it aloud."

The ex-detective received the document, which was old and faded, and read, aloud:

"WASHINGTON, December 8th, 188—

"MY DEAR HUSBAND OR CHILD: Should this ever fall into your hands, you will know that I am dying. Oh! Gerald, my husband, come to me, and bring our child! I shall have but a few days to live, at the longest, and I want to see you ere I die. Oh! Lord, spare me till then!"

"I know not what ails me, but I have suspicions—oh! horrible suspicions, that I am being poisoned. The doctors shake their heads, and call it a strange case—beyond their comprehension. But, when the savage-looking Italian chemist comes, my soul is filled with horror. I can hear him and Vermillie chuckling together, as over some diabolical plot."

"LATER.

"Vermillie has just been to see me, and has confessed to me that I am doomed. No one has been admitted to see me to-day, and I am impressed that, after to-night, I shall be out of my misery. Vermillie is my murderer, Gerald—and the child, look for it, far and wide. It is marked, so that when you find it, if, indeed, you are alive, you will know it. It has a crimson star upon either of its arms, above the elbow. One is very faint, and may disappear. There, some one is coming, and I must hide this. I am dying—dying in torture. God bless you, my first husband and child."

"MAHON TRACY VERMILLIE."

"That is all," McQuaver said, laying down the tell-tale document.

CHAPTER XII.

CLEARED—A DAUGHTER'S ACT.

"It is enough!" Gerald Tracy said. "It is enough to hang Silas Fry, and he shall certainly pay the penalty. Come! we have learned enough, to satisfy me. My good woman, here are fifty dollars for your faithfulness, and more reward shall follow, by and by. Now, McQuaver, we shall have to go, for another matter awaits our attention."

Accordingly they left the miserable dwelling of the negress, and hurried back into the heart of the city.

At the Ebbitt House they stopped, and took rooms for the day; then leaving McQuaver at the hotel, Gerald Tracy started for the bank, where, years before, he had in a dark hour yielded to the influences of temptation.

Upon entering the bank he saw only strange faces, and upon inquiring of the cashier for President —, a look of surprise overspread the official's allow face.

"Mr. —, did you say?" he demanded, stroking his side-whiskers. "My dear sir, you must be a stranger in these parts. President — died ten years ago."

"Is not the bank in the same stockholders' hands, then, as eighteen years ago?" Watch-Eye demanded.

"With a few exceptions, yes."

"Who is President, here, now?"

"Mr. M —, sir."

"He was formerly vice-president?"

"He was."

"Then, he is the man I want to see. Please hand him my card."

And drawing a card from his pocket, Gerald Tracy handed the cashier a card, upon which was printed:

"WATCH-EYE, SHADOW-DETECTIVE."

The clerk started as he saw the inscription, and bowed as he took himself off, wonderingly.

Watch-Eye had not long to wait, ere he was shown into the private office of the President.

That gentleman bowed courteously, and motioned the Shadow to a seat.

He was a portly, smooth-faced man, with kindly features, and Gerald Tracy remembered him, even though nineteen years had passed since they last met, for in feature she had experienced little or no perceptible change.

"You do not know me, I dare say, and wonder what brings me here," he said, accepting the proffered chair.

"Well, really, no; I cannot account for a visit from one of your stamp. You come on business, I suppose?"

"Yes, strictly on business. The case which I have in hand is one somewhat peculiar in its nature, some nineteen years ago, an employee of this bank stole a sum of money amounting to fifty thousand dollars, and absconded, did he not?"

"Exactly! What do you know about the matter? If you have any valuable evidence, you shall be paid well for it."

"I have to offer you a confession recently written by one William McQuaver, a detective," Watch-Eye replied, and taking from his pocket the paper, he handed it to the President, who bridging his glasses upon his nose, carefully perused the confession.

When he laid it down, there was an expression of surprise upon his face.

"This is a strange case," he said, drumming thoughtfully upon the table. "It seems that Tracy said his debt, after all, and that this McQuaver was no nigger in the bush."

"You see, the money appropriated by Gerald Tracy was taken from certificate deposits, and from private vaults. It belonged to patrons of the bank, and rather than they should be the losers, President —, my predecessor, made good the sums taken, out of his own purse, so that, in reality, the bank has no claim on the money. We have kept the warrant ready, in behalf of the President's wife, in case either Tracy was captured or should return, of his own accord."

"Then, you believe Tracy exonerated?"

"Certainly. The confession proves that, clear enough, and I shall withdraw the warrant to-day, which can be done by explaining the situation."

"How about McQuaver? Cannot he have exemption from prosecution upon restoration of the money?"

"That is just as the government and Mrs. —, the former President's wife, see fit. I will lay the case before the proper authorities, and let you know, this afternoon or evening. Where shall I find you?"

"At the Ebbitt House. You may inquire for Gerald Tracy, and I shall be pleased to wait on you."

"What! am I to understand that you are Gerald Tracy?"

"I am the same."

"Then let me shake hands with you. You have passed through a life-cloud, and I believe have profited by the singular experience you have had."

"Thank you. I am a better man, I trust, than nineteen years ago, and shall try to live a life in the future that shall be without reproach."

Gerald Tracy then left the bank, and returned to McQuaver, who, upon hearing the news, looked rather grim.

"They can do as they please," he said. "If they'd rather arrest me and put me in jail, than to promise me immunity and have a full restoration of the money, they can do so. I will go to prison ten years, and then, when I come out, the money is mine, here," and the ex-detective laid a number of papers upon the table—"here are papers making you possessor of all my wealth. You can hunt it up, and keep it for me, providing I have to go to prison."

Among them are two checks upon the — Bank of Philadelphia, for one hundred and sixty-one thousand dollars, drawn payable to you. This leaves you to settle with the bank, in case there is to be no prosecution. Surveying the situation from all standpoints, I thought it advisable not to bring along any money."

That evening President M — paid them a visit, and brought with him Mr. —, wife of the former president of the Bank, and also the *nile pros.* for

McQuaver, making him a free man upon the restoration of the money, principal and interest, that he had stolen after it was paid to him by Gerald Tracy.

Whereupon Watch-Eye gave Mrs. — a check upon his bank for the full amount, and matters were satisfactorily settled, so that when Gerald Tracy and McQuaver were once more alone together, they were free men.

Remainder in Washington over night, they the next day started on their return to Philadelphia, for Watch-Eye was now free, and fearless—free to brave Silas Pry with the powerful document he held against the banker.

He would have matters righted, though years had passed and gone.

After his defeat and rebuff at the fire, Judge Vermilyle returned to his mansion, and locked himself in his library, in company with the great cases of books, a bottle of wine, and a box of cigars.

"I am beaten, there," he mused, staring savagely at a veiled statue that was gazing down upon him from a pedestal. "Curse that detective, Sphinx! He and the returned devil, Gerald Tracy, seem leagued in an attempt to ruin me, and drive me out. But they have a tiger to fight. Tracy dare not show himself, fearing arrest, and I care not for what ill he can do me, so long as he keeps out of sight. But, he must not live to triumph. He *must* not. I have not lived all my life without sinning, and, by heaven, I shall not hesitate to sin again, to gain the consummation of my plans. Ha! ha! what do I care for the worst he can do? I have not yet to beg of any person. To be sure, I own but one piece of property, and that is where the old tenement stood, for this house, my factory and steamship, are deeded to Beatrice, my daughter. But, I have five hundred thousand dollars in greenbacks, in my immediate possession. In yonder safe the money reposes, and I carry the key. Then, there is the mortgage upon Riverdale, now in the hands of the attorney for foreclosure. That will bring me in ready cash, unless I bid in the estate. Ha! ha! you are yet triumphant, Silas Pry, and can laugh at your enemies. Ha! a ring at the door. Who can want me?"

The question was soon solved, for a servant brought up a slip of paper in lieu of a card, and respectfully awaited an answer.

Vermilyle took the paper, and glanced at the writing upon it. In poor chirography was penciled the name—

"JARED OGGLESBY."

"Show him up," the banker ordered.

And he and the miser were soon locked in the library, together.

Ogglesby had been imbibing freely, and there was a sullen, bull-dog look upon his face.

"I have come to make terms," he said, sullenly, "and I haven't long to wait. I want money—the more, the better it will suit me. I did that job, and now I'm going to clear out and live a better life."

Silas Pry laughed, sarcastically.

"You lead a better life?" he said, with a grimace. "When that happens, I shall be willing to pay you. But not till then."

"What do you mean?" Ogglesby demanded, a greenish glitter coming into his eyes. "You promised to pay me for burning the tenement."

"Perhaps. But promises are cheap. Why, you old rascal, you've stolen enough out of me to make a poor man rich."

"Then you don't intend to pay me?"

"Not a red cent."

"Very well. Inside of an hour, every secret I possess of yours shall be heralded to the four winds."

"Bah! what can you tell, that will materially affect me?"

"You shall see that. Supposing the world was to know how Mrs. Vermilyle died? Supposing the world was to know who were the robbers of the — Bank? Supposing the world was to know who abducted Gerald Tracy's child, years ago, and, only to-night hired me to burn that same child alive, in the old tenement? Supposing the world at large was to know all this, and much more, Judge Vermilyle, *alias* Silas Pry? Do you not realize how insignificant a person you would be, and what danger your neck would be in, of getting entangled in the meshes of the sheriff's noose?"

Vermilyle had grown white, at the words of the miser, but a glass of wine somewhat restored his bravado.

"You dare not make all these exposes," he growled. "The law would not let you off no more than me."

"I don't know about that. I would stand one chance in a hundred of escaping, by turning State's evidence. Besides, if I cannot get money I cannot leave the city, and my capture, with a dozen detectives at my heels, is only a matter of a few hours, anyhow. So, if I am captured, I shall make a clean breast of it!"

"You devil, I've a mind never to let you leave this room alive," Vermilyle hissed, in a passion.

"Try to kill me, if you choose, and see which will get the most of the bargain!" Ogglesby replied, pulling a revolver suddenly down out of his coat-sleeve. "I came prepared for this interview, you no doubt perceive!"

"Curse you again. How much money do you want?"

"Ten thousand dollars, exactly. I will not accept of nine thousand, nine hundred dollars, and ninety-nine and three-quarter cents. It must be exactly ten thousand dollars."

"Good Heavens, man, are you mad? I have not so much money in the world!"

"Bah! don't lie to me. You have often bragged of how much you had stored away in yonder safe. Come! I will brook no delay. Either ten thousand dollars it is, or you go to prison."

With a sigh as if of despair, Judge Vermilyle arose, and advanced toward his safe.

"Do you promise to take your everlasting departure, upon receipt of the money, and never trouble me again?" he demanded, turning upon Ogglesby, half-suspiciously.

"I give my word of honor, as a gentleman," the miser replied, with a smirk. "You know I'm a thoroughbred gentleman, and value my integrity next to my life."

"You are a *fine* gentleman," Vermilyle sneered, savagely. "But you shall have the money, and if you ever show up within my sight again, you shall die, if I have to kill you myself."

"Very well. I'll take your money for it, you can bet, instead of your word. I shall immediately lie myself to some Western city, and become the pastor of some Bethel church."

Vermilyle did not reply, but kneeling in front of his safe, began to turn the knob communicating with the combination lock.

"Devils!" he gasped, "somebody has been tampering with this lock. Beatrice, I'll wager, if she has had need of money. But there's one satisfaction. She might try a lifetime, without getting the safe open. Ah!"

And the judge opened the door, which swung back on its ponderous hinges. Then he uttered a snarl like some infuriated wild beast.

"I've been robbed! I've been robbed!" he gasped, sinking back upon the floor, his face deathly white. "Here—Ogglesby—read this paper, and see what it says; and he picked up a document which had fallen upon the carpet.

The miser seized the paper, and glanced it over, before speaking.

"It is from your daughter, and here is what it says," he said.

"PHILADELPHIA, May —, 187—."

"DEAR PAPA: Ere this reaches you I shall be far away from you, where a lifetime's search could not find me. By the time you get this paper, you will have discovered that your safe is robbed of every cent of money, and you will of course lay the theft to me, which is correct in you. I am the thief—I and my beloved Marquis. We have been spending a week at opening the safe, and have just succeeded. The Marquis was an adept in the business, or else we should not have succeeded. Of course you cannot blame me. I have always been a kind, indulgent daughter, and I did want some money so bad, that I could not resist the temptation to borrow yours. Of course I borrow it—I would not stoop so low as to steal it! I leave you this note of explanation as security. It was so good of you to place the money at my disposal—so extremely good of you, dear papa. Of course you can easily again make the amount appropriated, and in addition, learn a valuable lesson never to leave your ill-gotten cash where a child can reach it. As for my dear Marquis, and myself, we shall go to some remote corner of the earth, get married, and live in wealth and honor all the rest of our natural lives, at your expense."

"Believe me still, dear papa,

"Your dutiful and loving daughter,

"BEATRICE VERMILYLE."

"That is all," Jared Ogglesby said, turning upon the judge, who was crouching on the carpet before his empty safe, white and speechless. "It's enough, I reckon, eh?"

"My God! This is the bitterest blow of all," Vermilyle groaned. "I never believed Beatrice, with all her faults, so utterly heartless and unnatural. I am a ruined man!"

"Yet, despite this fact," Ogglesby said, a spice of triumph in his tones, "you must somehow contrive to raise me ten thousand dollars, or—go to prison, branded as a murderer!"

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

"WHAT! would you press me to pay you that exorbitant sum when I am already a beggar?" Vermilyle gasped, almost in a frenzy of rage.

"Even so," Ogglesby assented, stolidly. "I must have money, and you must furnish it—I care not how you get it. You have the bank at your disposal!"

"Sh!" the Judge cautioned, giving a terrified glance around. "Not so loud. I do not want to be overheard. The bank business is out of the question. I fear suspicions are fastened upon me now. In God's name, man, release your hold upon me, and leave."

"Never, while I love you so dearly," Ogglesby replied, with a devilish chuckle. "You are mine, Silas Pry. Tell me you have no money? Why, the mortgage against Tracy's estate amounts to one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, or over."

"But, I have it not by me. The mortgage is in the hands of my attorney, who will foreclose it and sell the estate at Thomas & Son's auction-rooms to-morrow."

"Then, some other means must be adopted. I must have the money or you must go to Moyamensing, at once. I will, however, suggest a plan, to help you out, seeing as you have always been a friend to me. This man, Tracy, has plenty of money, and perhaps by breaking into his room, we might be able to discover this money, and appropriate it together. I will be on hand to share it with you, and after you have got the mortgage-money, which I will also share with you, we will flee from this city, to parts unknown. How like you the idea?"

"I like it not, but will acquiesce," Judge Ver-

millye returned, sullenly. "Where are the lodgings of Gerald Tracy?"

"In North 13th street. If we go, to-night, we will not find him at home, which will be all the better for our purpose."

"If not at home, where is he?"

"In Washington, whither he went to-day, in company with the man, McQuaver."

"Perdition! What are they doing together, and in Washington?"

"That I cannot say. But stay; before we can play burglar, we must have disguises."

"Which I have on hand, in a great plenty. You know it never pays a man of my stamp to be without them?"

And the judge laughed evilly.

At Ogglesby's suggestion they set to work immediately, in making up for their expedition. From a trunk in an adjoining room, Vermillye, or Silas Pry, as we shall in future call him, brought forth numerous suits of clothing, wigs and false beards, and he and Ogglesby adorned themselves, according to their particular fancy. The judge cut off his long beard, with a pair of shears, and donned a false beard of a reddish tinge, with hair to match, which gave him altogether a very much changed appearance.

Securing an assortment of keys and house-breaker's tools, which the judge had on hand, they sallied forth into the night.

The Shadow's rooms were in a tenement-block similar to that which Ogglesby had fired, but the building was a better structure, the tenants a better class of people, and the neighborhood more aristocratic.

On arriving at the scene of their proposed operations, Ogglesby led the way up a broad staircase from the street, into a dimly lighted hall. They followed back until its intersection with another hall which they traversed for a considerable distance, finally pausing in front of a door, over which was the number 37.

"This is the place," the miser announced, in a low tone. "Give me your keys, and I will see if I can unlock the door."

Silas Pry surrendered the keys, and kept a watch around them, lest they should be surprised in their burglarious act, while his confederate in crime softly tried to unlock the door.

After trying several keys, he at last found one that turned in the lock!

"Come!" he said, in a low tone—"the door is unlocked, and now is our time."

Softly opening the door, they entered the room, then reclosed the door behind them.

All was dark and silent, but Ogglesby soon struck a light with a match, which enabled him to find and light a lamp.

"Now be lively," he ordered, setting the light upon a table. "Help me to examine every article in the room which may contain money."

They went to work as rapidly and noiselessly as practical burglars, overturning and examining each article of furniture, but all to no avail.

No money was to be found, and their expedition was a fruitless one.

So all that was left for them to do was to take a cautious departure.

"You see—I cannot get any money!" Silas Pry said, as they hurried away from the tenement.

"I shall wait and share the results of the mortgage foreclosure," the miser replied, coolly. "There is no use of arguing the point—you must share all of your remaining wealth with me, or go to prison. I'll leave you now, but will meet you again at Thomas & Son's salesrooms, to-morrow afternoon at three, the hour appointed for the sale of Riverdale."

At the auction-rooms, on the afternoon of the next day, the estate of Riverdale was to be sold, and having been but little advertised there were few in attendance.

Silas Pry was present, and Jared Ogglesby was not far away.

When it was seen that there were no more bidders likely to come, the auctioneer arose from his seat, and said:

"Gentlemen, we are about to sell a piece of Virginia property, known as Riverdale, upon foreclosure of mortgage. The estate is one of the finest in the South; has been for many years a plantation. It was mortgaged to Silas Pry, nineteen years ago, since when the mortgage has been handed over to Judge Felix Vermillye. The first mortgagee, Gerald Tracy, having not put in appearance, and the day of payment having passed the customary three days' grace, Judge Vermillye has ordered me to sell the property for what it will bring, spot cash. It was originally mortgaged for seventy-five thousand dollars, but is now valued at two hundred thousand. Now, then, here is a rare strike for capitalists—who'll give a bid to start it?—where's the man?"

"Twenty dollars!" shouted a personage in the vicinity of the door, whose accent savored strongly of the "ould sod."

Whereupon there was a roar of laughter.

"Put that man out," roared the auctioneer, bringing down his mallet, fiercely. "No man with twenty dollars' worth of cash or brains will be allowed to bid on this property."

"I'll start it at ten thousand dollars," announced a prominent Third street speculator.

"Ten thousand! ten thousand! ten thousand! I have—who'll make it twenty? ten thousand—who'll make it twenty?" the auctioneer cried, starting off in his sing-song style.

"Hold! I forbid the sale!" cried a deep, strong voice, and there entered the salesroom Gerald Tracy, accompanied by McQuaver, and Jack Sphinx.

"By what right do you interfere?" demanded the auctioneer.

"Allow me to explain," Tracy said, calmly. "That mortgage is not legal, although I supposed it to be when it was given. I am Gerald Tracy, who gave it to Silas Pry, in consideration of a loan of fifty thousand dollars. The mortgage specifies seventy-five thousand dollars, but one-third of that was usury—which alone disbars the claim. At the time, my wife was living, but I did not get her consent to the mortgage, and therefore in the State of Virginia, the mortgage was not legal, as there, as well as in Baltimore, where it was given, or in Washington, a wife must give her consent before a piece of property can be mortgaged! This man Vermillye, is the same Silas Pry to whom the mortgage was originally given, and I have a confession from my dead wife which implicates him in her murder."

And I arrest him, in the name of the law!" Jack Sphinx cried, turning toward where the judge had stood upon their entrance, "on the charges of murder and robbery."

But that time Jack had literally "counted his chickens before they were hatched," for taking advantage of the crowd which had collected, the exposed Silas Pry had slipped from the salesroom, and was gone. Whither, no one could say, for instant search resulted in discovering no trace of him.

Of course the sale was stopped, and the illegal mortgage was canceled, afterward. Knowing the crimes and villainy of Silas Pry, Gerald Tracy felt that he was doing justice to himself, in not paying any portion of the original loan.

McQuaver it was who had informed him concerning the mortgage's illegality. Therefore, upon their arrival from Washington, and seeing notices posted of the sale, they had come direct to the salesroom. Meeting Jack Sphinx on the way, Gerald Tracy had hailed him, and explained that he was the "Rastus Racket" whom Jack and Nellie had induced to enter the Reformatory Home, over a year before. This was a joyful discovery to Jack, and matters were arranged so that he should take Marion Vermillye's death confession, and arrest Silas Pry upon the strength of it.

How the matter terminated, the reader has already seen.

After the scene at the salesroom, the three men adjourned to a restaurant for dinner, which neither Tracy nor McQuaver had yet been able to obtain, in their hurried operations.

While they were eating, the following conversation took place:

"I doubt if anything of Silas Pry, *alias* Judge Vermillye, is ever seen again, in this city," Jack observed. "I hear that his daughter has absconded with all his ready money, and I guess that about closes up his career."

"Let him go," Watch-Eye said. "If he will go and never return, I shall not offer to follow him, for I realize that there will yet be a day of reckoning, when every man shall have his sins held up before his eyes. And those who have sinned most, I believe shall suffer most. But one cloud lies between me, yet, and a peaceful future—that is, the mystery of the whereabouts of my child."

"Your child? Did you ever lose one?"

"Yes—years ago, my girl-baby was stolen away, by this selfsame Silas Pry, and I have never known of it, until a year ago, since when I have been unable to find a trace of it."

"Then, by Jove, I believe I know where your daughter is!" Jack cried, jumping excitedly to his feet. "Do you remember, my sweetheart, Nellie, whom you promised you would enter the Home?"

"Yes! yes!"

"Well, there is some mystery concerning her life. She has, so long as she can remember, been bound to Jared Ogglesby, one of this Vermillye's tools. Who were her parents, she never has known. But this Vermillye has been her enemy of late, to that extent, that he has attempted to kill her. His hatred for her has seemed to date back to the moment he discovered a birth-mark upon her arm."

"God be praised! I believe 'tis my child—my long-lost child. Tell me—this birthmark—what is its shape?"

"It is a crimson star, upon the arm above the elbow!"

"Ha! the same—the same! But, has she not one upon either arm?"

"Yes, but the one upon the left arm is very faint—almost colorless."

"Then, show me to her at once, for circumstances clearly indicate that this is my child. The confession describes those identical birthmarks, and the fact that Vermillye recognized the marks goes to show that he knew her to be my daughter, and wished to put her out of the way, so that I might never find her!"

Of course the dinner was interrupted, and our friends hastily adjourned to the residence of Kate Carson, where a happy reunion took place between the long separated father and daughter; for Gerald Tracy was perfectly satisfied that Nellie was his daughter, and he thanked God fervently for the happy restoration.

Jared Ogglesby and Silas Pry were heard of, later, in the Far West, but Gerald Tracy made no effort to apprehend the man who had been the bane of his latter life.

With Nellie, he removed to Riverdale, in Virginia, but Jack Sphinx soon came to claim her, so that the returned father was left alone. Not long, however, for he soon brought home a bride in the person of Kate Carson, for whom he had formed an attachment. And both he and Jack are happy in the possession of true and loving wives, and are prospering, as the world wags on.

McQuaver is occasionally with them, and is not sorry for "turning over a new leaf," for he finds it a good life, *happiness*.

THE END.

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